

2003704  
A  
TREATISE  
OF  
OATHS,

Containing  
Several Weighty Reasons why the People  
call'd *QUAKERS* refuse to *SWEAR* :

And those Confirmed by  
Numerous Testimonies out of *Gentiles, Jews and*  
*CHRISTIANS*, both *Fathers, Doctors and Martyrs.*

Presented to the  
*King and Great Council of England,*  
Assembled in

PARLIAMENT.

---

*Mat. 5. 34. But I say unto you, Swear not at all.*

*Jam. 5. 22. Above all things, my Brethren, Swear not.*

*Jer. 32. 10. Because of Oaths the Land Mourneeth.*

---

*Theognis, He ought to Swear neither this thing nor any thing.*  
*Mamonides, It is a great Good for a Man not to Swear at all.*  
*Chrysostom, It is not lawful to Swear, neither in a just nor unjust*  
*Cause.*

---

Printed Anno 1675.

FRATERNITY

OF THE

KNIGHTS



TO THE  
King and Great Council  
OF  
ENGLAND,

Assembled in

PARLIAMENT.

The Case of the People call'd QUAKERS relating to OATHS further Represented; and Recommended to their Consideration, in order to a Speedy and Effectual REDRESS.

**T**He common Benefit of the Free People of England being undoubtedly both the first and greatest Reason for the Ancient, Just & Necessary Constitution of Parliaments; and being also inform'd that it is your Resolution, to employ this Session to the Redress of Publick Grievances: And since We cannot but repute our selves

(3)  
*selves a Member of this Great Body you  
represent, by Birth and English Descent;  
and are not only involved in the Common  
Calamities of the Kingdom, but in Particular  
very cruelly Treated in our Persons  
and Estates, because we cannot for  
pure Conscience take any Oath at all  
(though we have again and again tender'd  
our solemn Yea or Nay; and are most  
willing to sustain the same Penalty in  
Case of Lying, that is usually inflicted for  
Perjury) To the End we may not be  
interpreted to decline the Custom out of  
meer Humour or Evasion (though our  
frequent & heavy Sufferings by Fines  
and tedious Imprisonments, sometimes to  
Death it self, should sufficiently Vindicate  
us against any such Incharitable Censure)  
WE do, with all due Respect, present you  
with our Reasons for that Tendernefs, and  
many Testimonies and Precedents in their  
De-*

*Defence; and we entreat you, to express  
 that Care of a Member of your own Civil  
 Body, which Nature and Christianity  
 excite to; We mean, That it would please  
 you to consider how deeply we have al-  
 ready suffered, in Person and Estate,  
 the Inconveniencies we have daily to en-  
 counter, and those Injurious not only to  
 our selves, but others we commerce with,  
 in that both they and we, because of our  
 Tenderneſs in this Matter, are constantly  
 at the Mercy of ſuch as will Swear any  
 thing to advantage themſelves, where  
 they are ſure that a Contrary Evidence  
 ſhall be by Law eſteem'd (however  
 True) Invalid; under which Difficulty  
 ſeveral of us at this Hour fruitleſſly la-  
 bour: That being ſenſible of our Calami-  
 ty, you may pleaſe to endeavour, as for  
 others, ſo for this Grievance, both a Speedy  
 and Effectual Redreſs; otherwiſe, beſides  
 ordi.*

ordinary Cases, wherein many of us extraordinarily suffer, we may perhaps prove in this of Oaths the Greatest, if not the Only Sufferers of the Kingdom; a Cruelty, we hope, you do not design against us.

God Almighty, we beseech him with all Sincerity of Heart, incline you to Justice, Mercy and Truth, Amen.

London, the 25th of 2  
the 3d Moneth, 1675. }

*Subscribed on the behalf of the rest of our Friends by*

Alexander Parker,  
George Whitehead,  
Stephen Crisp,  
William Mead,  
Gerrard Roberts,  
William Welsh,

Samuel Newton,  
Thomas Heart,  
John Osgood,  
James Claypool,  
Thomas Rudyard,  
Richard Richardson,

William Penn.

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THE

Some Inducements Offer'd.

TO  
*Answer this* REQUEST,

From a Consideration of the  
Cause and End of an Oath,  
And those

REASONS  
AND  
TESTIMONIES,  
Given by us against the USE and  
IMPOSITION of it.

---

The GROUND or Reason of Swearing.

**T**His (we think) all will agree to have been the  
*Regeneration* of Man from primitive Integrity, at what time *Yes* and *No* were enough;  
for when men grew corrupt, they distrusted each other,  
and had recourse to extraordinary Wayes to awe one  
another into Truth's-speaking, as a Remedy against Falseness;

ness; else, what need had there been of an Oath, or any Extraordinary Way of Evidence, when every Syllable was freighted with Truth and Integrity? It had been a meer taking of God's Holy Name in vain: Truth then flowed naturally, and wanted no such Expedient to Extort its Evidence.

- \* Lived before Chr. 100. years.  
H. Grotius on Mat. 5.  
Bp. Gauden of Oaths, p. 36.  
in Psalm 14.  
Job 20.
- Thus, \* Polybius, though an Heathen, in his Story of the Romans, saith, Among the Ancients Oaths were seldom used in Judicatures themselves; but when Perfidiousness increased, Oaths increased, or then the Use of them first came in.
- Basilus Magnus saith, Oaths are an Effect of Sin.  
Gregorius Nazianzenus in his Dialogue against Swearing, saith, An Oath is nothing else but a certain consummation of Mischiefs.
- Comment. on Mebr. c 6.  
Amprosius saith, Swearing is only in Condescension to a Defect.
- Hom. 9. on Acts 3.  
Chrysostom saith, An Oath came in when Evils increased, when men appeared unfaithful, when all things became Topsey Turvy. Again,  
To swear is of the Devil, seeing Christ saith, What is more (then Tea, &c.) is of Evil.
- Hom. Psal. 5.  
To swear took its Beginning for want of Truth or Punishment.
- Ad Pop. Antioch.  
Augustin saith, An Oath is not among good, but Evil Things, and used for the Infirmitie of others which is Evil, from which we pray that we may be daily delivered.
- on Mat. 5.  
Chromatius saith, What need we swear, seeing it is unlawful to Lye. Which shows that Lying was the Occasion of Oaths, and by leaving off Lying, Oaths vanquish at unprofitable.
- on Psal. 14.  
on Mat. 5.  
Vlt. Chr. p. 2. c. 12.  
on Mat. 5.  
Tietmannus saith, that an Oath belongs not to Virtue.
- p. 17. and 23.  
Albertus Magnus saith, Swearing is by Indulgence.  
Ladolphus saith, An Oath was permitted of Infirmitie.  
Burgensis cites Jerome saying, Our Saviour teacheth that an Oath spring from the Vices of Men.  
Bp. Gauden also tells us, That the Evils of mens Hearts

Heart and Manners, the Jealousy and Distrust, the Dis-  
simulation and Frauds of many Christians, their Unchar-  
itableness and Insecurities are such, as by their Diseases  
do make solemn Oaths and judicial Swearing necessary,  
not **ABSOLUTELY MORALLY** or **PRE-**  
**CEPTIVELY**; but as a Remedy or Expedient.

Mat. 5. 33, 37

from (with many of the Fathers, Chrysostom, Theo-  
dori, and others here omitted, because largely cited here-  
after) make this the Reason why God indulged the  
Jews in the Use of Swearing, That they were not in  
the State of Infancy, and that they might be kept from  
Swearing by false Gods; which the Scripture is plain  
in: For thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and swear by  
His Name; Ye shall not go after other Gods, for God  
is a jealous God, &c. Which shews, that he dispen-  
sed with Swearing by his Name, that he might take them  
off from Swearing by False Gods, because they would  
thereby acknowledge them; and not the True God; so  
that Swearing is only better then Idolatry.

Deut. 6. 13

It will remain that we give our **REASONS**  
why we cannot take this Liberty, and Swear,  
as well as other Men have done, and yet do.

**T**He first is drawn from the Cause and Ground of  
Oaths, viz. Perfidiousness, Distrust and Fal-  
shood; God's Judgment to avoid those hateful Crimes;  
The Ability he hath given man to answer his Commands;  
and Man's Duty to make that use of God's Gift; For if  
Swearing came in by Perfidiousness, Distrust, Dissimu-  
lation and Falshood, it is most just Consequence that it  
ought to go out with them; or that, as the Rise and In-  
creasing of those Evils were the Rise and Increasing of  
Dishy, so the Decreasing and Extirpation of those Evils



should be the Decreasing and Abolishing of Oaths; otherwise there would be no Truth in the Rule of Contraries, nor Reason in that ancient *Maxim*, *Cessante ratione Legis cessat lex*; That the Ceasing of the Reason of the Law is the Ceasing of the Law: Expedients are no longer useful then to obtain what they are designed to. Means are swallowed up of their Ends; Diseased Men only want Remedies, and Lame Men Crutches; Honesty needs neither Whip nor Spur, She is Security for herself; and Men of Virtue will speak Truth without Exhortings; for Oaths are a sort of Racks to the Mind, altogether useless where Integrity swayer.

This we presume no man of Reason will deny, viz. That Swearing came in, and ought to go out with Perfidiousness; and we hope it will be as easie to grant, at least it will be very easie to prove, That God hath frequently, both by Prophets and Apostles, reprov'd men for such Impieties, and strictly required Truth and Righteousness; as, *Isa.* 59. 3, 4. *Jer.* 9. 3, 4. *Rom.* 12. 19. *Gal.* 5. 19, 20, 21. *Col.* 3. 8, 9, 10. *Josh.* 24. 14. *3 Sam.* 12. 24. *1 King.* 2. 4. *Eph.* 4. 25. and by abundance of other Places in Holy Scripture. And that God should enjoyn man any thing that he hath not empowered him to perform, is unworthy of any man acknowledging a God, so much as to conceive. It is true, that the unprofitable Servant in the Parable is represented to entertain so blasphemous a Thought of his Maker, that he was so hard a Master, as to reap where he did not sow; but the same Parable also acquaints us of the dreadful Consequence of that Presumption: The Prophet *Micah* preached another Doctrine, The Lord hath showed thee, O Man, what is good: and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do Justly, to love Mercy, and to walk Humbly with thy God? For this End hath the Grace of God appeared unto all Men, as speaks the Apostle *Paul* to *Titus*, that they should be taught to deny Ungodliness and Worldly Lusts, which entering & over-running the World, made

Mic. 6. 8.



made way among other Expedients for that of Oaths, that  
to live that Life which needs *No Oath*, man is both requir'd  
and impower'd: And as it is only his Fault and Condem-  
nation, if he doth not; so certainly there can be no Ob-  
ligation upon him who liveth that Life of Truth and Inte-  
grity to perpetuate that which rose, and therefore ought  
to fall with Falshood and Perfidiousness: the *Reason* of the  
thing it self excuses him; for, he that fears Untruth, needs  
not swear, because *he will not lye*, to prevent which men  
exact Swearing: And he that doth not fear telling Un-  
truth, what is his Oath worth? He that makes no Con-  
science of that Law that forbids Lying, will he make any  
Conscience of Forswearing? Veracity is the best Secu-  
rity; and Truth-speaking the Noblest Tye and Firmest  
Testimony that can be given. This we declare to you  
to be both our Judgment and Attainment; We speak  
not Boastingly, but with Humility before the Great Lord of  
Heaven and Earth, to whose alone Power we do unani-  
mously ascribe the Honour: He hath taught us to speak  
the Truth, the whole Truth, and nothing but the Truth,  
as plainly and readily without an Oath as with an Oath,  
and to abhor Lying as much as Perjury; so that for us to  
swear, were to take his Holy Name in vain: Nor are we  
therein singular; for that not only *Christian Fathers, Monks*  
and *Doctors*, but also *Jews* and *Heathens* have had this  
Sense of the Rise and Use of Oaths, as will hereafter ful-  
ly appear.

I. I. Our *second Reason*, why we refuse to comply with  
this Custom, and our Superiours ought not to impose it,  
is this, *It would Gratifie Distrust, Humor Jealousies,*  
*and Subject Truth, and those that love it, to the same*  
*Checks, Curbs and Preventions that have been invented a-*  
*gainst Fraud*; whereby the Honour of a Nobler Profes-  
sion, the Power of a veracious Example, and the just  
Difference that ought to be made betwixt Trustfulness and  
Diffidence, Integrity and Perfidiousness, are utterly lost.  
How.

How is it possible for men to recover that ancient Confidence that good men reposed in one another, if some don't lead the Way, and hold forth to the World a Principle and Conversation beyond the Necessity of such extraordinary Expedients? At present People lie all in a Heap; and the Greatest Truth finds no more Favour than the greatest Fraud; Fidelity must wear the Shackles worldly Prudence hath made against the Evil Consequences of Couzenage, and subject her self to the Customs brought up through Fraud, or go to Gaol. Be pleased to consider, that Trustiness did not all at once quit the World, nor will it return universally in the Twinkle of an Eye; Things must be allowed their Time for Rise, Progress and Perfection: And if ever you would see the World planted with Primitive Simplicity and Faithfulness, rather cherish than make men Sufferers for Refusing to Swear, especially if they offer the same Caution to the Law with him that will swear. We dare not Swear because we dare not Lye, and that it may appear to the World, that we can speak the Truth upon easier Terms than an Oath: For us then to be forc'd to swear, is to make us do a needless thing, or to suspect our own Honesty. The first we dare not, because, as we have said, it is to take God's Name in vain; and we have no Reason to distrust our selves, being no wayes conscious of fraudulent Purposes: Why then should we swear? But much

Bish. Gaud. of  
Oaks, p. 41.

rather, why should we be imposed upon? It is a Saying ascribed to Solon, That a good man should have that Repute as not to need an Oath; that it is a Diminution to his Credit to be put to Swear. It becomes not an Evangelical Man to Swear, was a primitive Axiom; but more of that anon: In the mean while please to remember, you have a Practice among you, to exempt your Lords in several Cases, placing the Value of an Oath in their bare Avouchment upon their Honour, supposing that men of those Titles should have so much Worth, as that their Word might be of equal Force with a Common Man's

Oath;

*Oath: And if you will please to understand it in the Sense of the most ancient and best of Philosophers, to wit, VIRTUE, your own Custom gives Authority to our Reason, & makes you to say with us, That Virtue needs not Swear, much less have Oaths imposed upon her, to tell Truth, the only Use of Oaths. It was Evangelically spoken of Clemens Alexandrinus, That a Good Life is a firm Oath; which was memorably verified by the Judges of Athens, who, though Heathens, forbade the Tendering of Xenocrates an Oath, because of their great Opinion of his Integrity, which was Three Hundred Years before Christ came in the Flesh.*

III. Our third Reason for Non conformity to your Custom is, the Fear we have, lest by Complying we should be guilty of Rebellion against the Discoveries God hath made to our Souls of his ancient holy Way of Truth, & consequently of concealing his Goodness to us, and depriving him of that Glory & the World of that Advantage this honest Testimony may bring to him & them. He has redeem'd us from Fraud; 'Tis he only that hath begotten this Conscientiousness in us; and we dare not put this Light under a Bushel, neither can we deny his Work, or him to have the Honour of it. We intreat you, take this Tenderness of ours into Christian Consideration.

IV. Oaths have in great measure lost of the Reason of their primitive Institution, since they have not that Awful Influence which was and only can be a Pretence for using them; on the contrary, they are become the familiar parts of Discourse, and help to make up a great share of the *Altogether* Conversation: and those who decline their Company, or reprove their Practice, are to go for a sort of *Stupid and squeamish Conscientious Men*. These Swear without Fear or Wit, yet would be thought Witty in Swearing, *Frankly* they can't: Some are curious in their Impiety; *Old Oaths* are too dull for men of their Invention, who almost shift

*Oaths.*

(14)

*Oaths with their Passions*: Nay, the most judicial Oaths are commonly administered and taken with so little Reverence and Devotion (to say nothing of the Perjuries, that through Ignorance or Design, are too frequently committed) that we can't but cry out, *Oh the great Depravity that is in the World! How low is Man fallen from the primitive Rule of Life?* Well may the Prophet's Complaint be ours, for, *If ever Land mourned because of OATHS*, with great Sadness we say it, *this doth*. And what more effectual Remedy can any People propose against the notorious Abuse and evil Consequence of Swearing, then *Truth-speaking*? for those that dare not Lye, need not Swear; and they that make no Conscience of Lying, do not much fear an Oath, at least their Consciences are very crazy in taking it. This only Reason, were we destitute of all other Allegations, would be a strong Dissuasive from Swearing; for we hold God's Honour, and our Profession greatly concern'd to prove to so False an Age, that there is a People who are so far from vain and false Swearing, that they dare not swear the Truth; but whose Yea and Nay shall weigh against other mens Oaths, and that with a free Offer of sustaining double Punishment in case of Miscarriage. Expedients may last a while, but TRUTH only shall have the Honour of conquering Falshood, and Virtue will and must be greater then an OATH.

V. The Omnipresency of God rightly understood, shows the Uselesness of an Oath, and is with us a good Argument against Swearing; for what need is there of that Man's being aw'd into true Evidence by such sort of Attestations and Imprecations as make up the common Form of Oaths, who knows God to be always present to reside and preside in his Soul, according to that New and Everlasting Covenant which he hath made, that his People should be his Temple, that he would dwell IN them, and walk IN them. Did the Children of men know the Power, Glory and Majesty of God, WHOM the Apostle preacht NIGH to the Athe-

nians, and declared to the *Ephesians* to be *Father of all*, *Ephel. 4. 6.*  
*above all, through all and IN THEM ALL*, there would  
be no *Oaths*, and but few *Words*, and those utter'd with  
Reverence and Truth.

VI. We do not find that *Oaths* answer this part of the  
End for which they are imposed, viz. *To convince those for  
whose sakes they are taken; of the Weight and Truth of a  
Man's Testimony by Force of God's Witness joyn'd thereto*  
*wish*: For they don't behold God's concurring Witness by  
such an Assistance or Avenge of that Party, as the Truth or  
Falshood of his Testimony deserveth; for the Judgments  
of God are secret, and rarely so publicly seen to Men, per-  
haps once in an Age, that he should give any memorable  
Discovery of his good Will or Displeasure in such a Case;  
but whenever he doth it, it is not at Man's Appointment:  
And it is an evident Sign that God approveth not of that  
sort of Invocation, because he doth not answer them that  
invoke him, according to their Wish; as neither did he in  
the old Law or Custom of *Combating* appear on his side  
that had the better Title or Cause, as he promised in the  
Law of *Jealousie*, that their Thigh should rot, and their Bel-  
ly swell, &c.

Numb. 5. 11,  
12.

VII. We look upon it to be no less then a presumptuous  
*Tempting of God, To summon him as a Witness*, not only to  
our Terrene, but trivial Business; such as we should  
doubtless account it an high Indignity alwaies to solicit an  
Earthly Prince to give his Attendance about. What?  
Make God, the Great God of Heaven and Earth our Cau-  
tion in worldly Controversies, as if we would bind him to  
obtain our own Ends? It is to make too bold with him,  
and to carry an undue Distance in our Minds towards him  
that made us; An Irreverence we can by no means away  
with, and upon which *Chrysostom* is most sharp, as will be  
seen anon. Besides it is vain and insolent to think that a man  
when he pleaseth, can make the Great God of Heaven a

C

Witness

Witness or a Judge in any matter to appear by some signal  
Approbation or Judgment, to help or forsake him, as the  
Truth or Falseness of his Oath requires, when he saith, *So  
help me God.*

VIII. Besides what we have hitherto urged in Defence  
of our selves against the Substance of the Oath, we justly  
except against the Form of it (which further adds to its Un-  
lawfulness, and consequently to our Vindication) as by the  
Contents and kissing of the Book; Swearing by a Sign, being  
Heathenish or Jewish. For the Romans held a Stone, and  
said, *If I deceive wittingly then let Dielspiter cast me out of  
my Goods, as I this Stone:* The Heroes swore by lifting up  
of the Scepter: *Caesar* swore by his Head, his House, that is,  
consecrated them to the Wrath of God; if he wittingly de-  
ceived, &c. The manner of the Jews is from Gen. 14. 22.  
that Abraham lift up his hand to God, *ON, If, &c.* putting the  
Hand under the Thigh, on the Head; passing betwixt Beasts  
divided, as God did to Abraham, &c. see more in Lapid.  
Sophoc. in Antiq. v. 270. Scoliaf. Baptif. Hansen of passing  
through Fire, swearing by the right Hand, &c.

The Use of *So help me God*, we find from the Law of the  
Almans, of King Clotharius: The laying on of three Fin-  
gers above the Book is to signifie the Trinity; the Thumb  
and the little Finger under the Book, are to signifie the Dam-  
nation of Body and Soul, if they forswear, *So help me God.*

Further be pleased to consider that the English Custom  
has very much overgone English Law in this Business of  
Oaths; they were anciently but solemn Attestations, *As the  
Lord liveth, &c.* which are now improv'd to Imprecations,  
*So help me God and the Contents of this Book:* Though it was  
so of old at Combat; but that concerns not our Case. For  
the Kissing of the Book, that is also Novil: Indeed after  
they rise from solemn Attestations to Imprecations, the  
Law required a Sight and Touch of the Book; The Saxon  
Jurors were *Sacra tenentes*; In the first Norman Times it  
was *Sacra tactu*; and in later Writs, *Evangelia tactu*;

may,

Fest. ad Lapid.

Polyb. l. 3 c. 25.

Alex. ab Alex.

l. 3. gen. dier. 10.

Cic. l. 5. Ep. 1.

Arist. 3 Pol. 10.

Plin. in pan. ad.

Trajan. c. 64.

Lindenbro. c. 3.

1027.



say, &c. *Brief's Hand* was on his *Breast* in *Swearing* not upon the *Book*. However *Yea* and *Gentile*, *Superstition* and *Ceremony*, have made up the present *Form* of *Oaths*, which the true *Christian-man* neither wants, nor we conceive, ought to perform; much less impose where *Tenderness* by *sober Consciences* is pleaded; and equal *Caution* offer'd to the *Law* for the *Integrity* of *Yea* and *Nay*.

I-X. But were we also destitute of this Plea, and the usual *Oaths* of our Country, the most inoffensively form'd, and best penn'd that ever any were, we have both the *Example* and *Precept* of our Lord and Saviour, *Jesus Christ*, to oppose to any such Practice; for in all that *History* delivered to us by the four *Evangelists*, we never read him to have used any further *Affirmation* then what in *English* amounts to *Verely, Verely, or Truly, Truly, I say unto you*: Thus by his *Example* exciting us the more readily to obey his express *Prohibition* of *Swearing*, *Mat. 5. 33, 34, 35, 36, 37.* which runs thus, *Again, Ye have heard that it has been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine Oathes; but I say unto you, SWEAR NOT AT ALL; neither by Heaven, for it is God's Throne; nor by the Earth, for it is his Footstool; neither by Jerusalem, for it is the City of the great King; neither shalt thou swear by thy Head, because thou canst not make one Hair white or black; but let your Word be YEA, YEA; NAY, NAY; for whatsoever is MORE then THESE cometh OF EVIL.*

He here prohibits even the *lesser Oaths*, as They thought them that reverence'd *Swearing* by the *Name* of the Lord, which in old time he suffer'd by reason of the *Fallenness* of their Hearts, and great *Pronness* to *Idols*; even as *Moses* permitted them to put away their *Wives*, which in the precedent Verse also is disallowed by *Christ*, though with the *Exception* of *Fornication*; but *Swearing* without any *Exception*: He doth not say, *Swear not except before a*

*Magistrate* (though he says, Put not away thy Wife, *except* for the Cause of Fornication) but **SWEAR NOT AT ALL**: why? because it is OF EVIL; which reason reaches the Oaths taken before *Magistrates*, as well as other Oaths; for Distrust & Unfaithfulness are the Cause of one as well as the other: And there is equal Reason in that respect, that a Master should swear in private to his Servant at his Entrance, that he will pay him his Wages, as that the Servant should swear in publick to a *Magistrate*, that at his Departure his Master would not pay him his Wages; both which Oaths the Certainty of their Words, their *Yea* being *Yea*, and their *Nay* being *Nay*, makes vain and superfluous.

Obj. We are not unsensible of the common *Objection* that is made against this Allegation of our Master's Command, That he only prohibited Vain Oaths in Communication: But if the words of the Text and Context be consider'd, every Oath will be proved Vain and Unlawful; for Christ's Prohibition was not a meer Repetition of what was forbidden under the Law, but what the Law allowed, as Bp. *Sander-son* well observeth; It was not needful that Christ should forbid what was forbidden in it self, or was alwayes Unlawful, which vain Swearing was and is by the third Commandment, Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain; therefore Christ exceeded the Prohibition of the Law: And the whole Chapter is a Demonstration of a more excellent Righteousness then that which either needed or used Oaths; for Christ brings *Adultery* from the Act to the Thought; in lieu of *Revenge* he commands *Suffering*, and extends *Charity* not only to Friends, but *Enemies*; so in the Place controverted, in the room of such Oaths & Vows as ought to be perform'd unto the Lord, he introduces *Yea* and *Nay*, with a most absolute **SWEAR NOT AT ALL**. This was the Advance he made in his excellent Sermon upon the Mount; he wound up things to an higher pitch of Sanctity then under the Law, or the childish State of the *Jews* could receive. Again, saith he, Ye have heard of old

Bp. R. *Sander-son*  
de Jur. Oblig.  
p. 141.



time, thou shalt not Forswear thy self, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine Oaths; but I say unto you, **SWEAR NOT AT ALL;** as plain, general and emphatical a Prohibition as can be found in Holy Scripture. However, those Persons that usually advocate for the Continuance of Oaths under the Gospel, tell us, it is not a general Prohibition, but is limited to Swearing by Creatures, either by Heaven, Earth, Jerusalem or Head, &c. Which is wholly inconsistent with the Scope of the Place, as we shall make appear from these Four Considerations: 1<sup>st</sup>, The Prohibition reaches as well to serious as vain Oaths, such as men made, if they swore at all, and ought to make to God only; for, to him alone should they perform them, and are they accountable for them: These very allowed Oaths of Old Time, are the first prohibited by Jesus Christ; *It was said of Old, thou shalt not Forswear thy self; but I say, SWEAR NOT AT ALL.* 'Tis true, it is not particularized what Oaths they were to keep of old; but in general Terms, that they were not to Forswear themselves; and it is clear that God enjoined them that would Swear, that they should only Swear by his Name. Now what can be hence inferred more evidently, then that men ought not to swear those Oaths under the Gospel, which they might swear, and ought not to forswear, but to perform unto the Lord in the Law. 2<sup>dly</sup>, Christ himself gives the Explanation of his own Words, Chap. 23. 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22. where he teacheth us, That he that swears by the Temple, swears by it, and by him that dwells therein; and he that shall swear by Heaven, swears by the Throne of God, and by him that sits thereon: So that he that swears by the Head, swears by him that made it; and he that swears by the Earth, swears by him that created it; which leaves no room for the Objection, for it was if Christ should have said, *I not only command you not to Forswear, but perform, as it was said to them of old times; but I charge you, NOT TO SWEAR AT ALL;* I mean, not only that you should not swear by God, and those Oaths that the Pharisees account binding; but al-

So, that you should not so much as swear by those lesser Oaths, as they esteem them, and which they are wont to swear by; for they are not less nor more allowable, in that they that swear by them, swear by him that is the Author and Maker of them: wherefore being of the same Nature with the other, I forbid you to swear by them as well as by those Oaths that were of old time made, and ought not to be broken but perform'd unto the Lord; for this is one of my great Commandments, which they must keep that will be my Disciples, that is to say, **SWEAR NOT AT ALL.** Our 3<sup>d</sup> Inducement to believe this to have been the Intention of our Lord Jesus Christ, is the concurrent Testimony of the Apostle James, which is not only a Repetition of his Master's Doctrine, but an *Addition and Illustration*, we hope sufficient to determine the present Question with every unprejudic'd Reader; *But above all things, my Brethren (saith he) swear not;* which runs parallel with *Swear not at all.* The Negative is as general & forcible. He proceeds, *neither by Heaven, neither by the Earth;* Words of equal Import with the latter part of Christ's Prohibition: and as if he had foreseen the Cavils of our Swearing Adversaries, he adds, *neither by any other Oath;* which though as clear as the Sun, if yet for their last shift they should tell us, that he only meant any other Oath of that kind, not that he prohibited *swearing by the Name of the Lord*, it will not do their Business; for that Christ hath already assured us, *Whosoever swears by Heaven, swears by him that sits thereon;* and the very next words show that it was not his Design only to prohibit vain, but plainly to exclude all Swearing, *But let your Yea be Yea, and your Nay, Nay, lest ye fall into Condemnation;* else why had he not said, *but you may swear by the Name of God before a Magistrate?* Why must *Neither* by any other Oath be added after such a plain Prohibition, as, *My Brethren, Above all things Swear not?* And why must *Yea* and *Nay* be substituted in the room of an Oath, if it was yet intended by the Apostle, that Christians might rise higher in their Evidence than a bare *Affirming* or *Denying?* that is, Though their *Yea* be never so truly *Yea*, and their *Nay* never

never so sincerely *Nay*, or the very Truth of the Matter be  
spoken, which is the Import of the Words; yet that they  
ought to swear. What is this but to contradict the natural  
Tendency of the Command of Christ and his Apostles?  
which is plainly this; *If your Yea be Yea, it is enough; if  
your Nay be Nay, it is sufficient; for Christians ought not to  
swear, if they do, they fall into Condemnation, in that they  
break their Master's Command, who hath told them, that  
Whatsoever is more then Yea or Nay, cometh of Evil, which*  
is the Ground of all Oaths; for they ought to mean so  
simply and honestly in what they say, as that they should  
never need to swear in order to tell the Truth. Our 4th  
and last Consideration, and that which to us seemeth of  
great Moment to clear up our Lord and Saviour's sense,  
and rescue the Passage from the Violence of Objectors, is this  
Clause, *For whatsoever is MORE then Yea, Yea, and Nay,  
Nay, cometh of Evil.* This cannot be intended of more  
Words then *Yea, Yea, and Nay, Nay*, provided they are  
not of an higher Strain, but of the same Degree of Speech  
importing a plain Assertion or Denyal of a thing; for it is  
not the Number, but Nature of the Words spoken, that  
is here prohibited: Nor can it be only understood of *Per-  
jury*; for every body knows that to be evil in it self, which  
is more then that which cometh OF, or because of Evil.  
Therefore, it must be understood as well of *Swearing*, as of  
*Forswearing*, which is not Evil it self, yet cometh of, or by  
Reason of Evil in the World: Nor is there any thing more  
then *Yea and Nay* besides *Perjury*, which can be inten-  
ded, but an Oath; and therefore that was intended. Christ  
doth not only prohibit Evil it self, but that which is Evil by  
Superfluity to Evangelical Sincerity, and that *Swearing* is  
(be it of what sort it will) wherever *Yea* is *Yea*, and *Nay* is  
*Nay*. In short, If what is *More then Yea and Nay, cometh  
of Evil*; then because any *Swearing*, as well as *Forswearing*,  
is more then *Yea and Nay*; it follows, that any *Swearing*  
cometh of Evil, and therefore ought to be rejected of *Chri-  
stians*. Nor will our English Translation of *Mat* 5:37 shelter  
our Objectors: For, *Communication* doth not exclude those

MANY

many Cases that require Evidences among men, no nor any the least Action of Man's Life; on the contrary, they have a great Place in Human Communication, which is comprehensive of the various Discourses and Transactions of a Man's Life, as 2 Kings 9. 11. 2 Sam. 3. 17. Eph. 4. 29. Col. 3. 8. 1 Cor. 15. 33. It is a word of the same Extent with *Conversation*, which takes in all that can happen between man and man in this World: Thus the Psalmist, *To him that ordereth his Conversation aright*, Psalm 50. 23. So the Apostle, *Let your Conversation be as becomes the Gospel*, Phil. 1. 27. Besides, *Abos* may be rendred *Word*, as in Job. 1. 1. and the Italian and French Translations have it, *Let your Word be Yea, Yea; Nay, Nay*; as much as if Christ had said, As I do not only condemn the Act for Adultery, which the Law did, but also the Conception of the Mind; and not only Murder, but Revenge likewise; so I do not only condemn *Forswearing*, which is done to my hand in the Latv of God, but prohibit *Swearing at all*; for I make that to be Unlawful, which the Law doth not call Unlawful: Therefore when your Evidence is called for, *Swear not at all*, but let your Word be *Yea, Yea*, and *Nay, Nay*; that is, Do not speak Untruth; for that is Evil: Don't Swear; for that comes of Evil. To conclude; People *swear* to the End they may *Speak Truth*; Christ would have men *Speak Truth*, to the End they might *not swear*: he would not have his Followers upon such base Reserves, but their Word to carry the Weight of an Oath in it; that as others ought not to be guilty of Perjury, *Christians* ought not to be guilty of Lying: For such is the Advance from *Moses* to *Christ*, *Jew* to *Christian*, that as the *Christian* needs not the *Jew's* Curb, so his Lye is greater then the *Jew's* Perjury, because his Yea or Nay ought to be of more Value then the other's Oath.

X. And lastly; Besides these express Prohibitions, *Swearing* is forbidden by the very Nature of Christianity, and unworthy of him that is the Author of it, who came not

not to implant so imperfect a Religion, as that which needed Oaths, or should leave Fraud, the Ground of Swearing, unextirpated; but to promulgate that Gospel which retrieveth ancient Sincerity, builds up Waste Places, restores those Breaches Oaths entered at, and leads into the Ancient Holy Paths of Integrity they never trod in: He is that Powerful Lord, which cureth the Diseases of all them that come unto him, and Mystical Serpent exalted, that relieves all that believingly look up to him: His Office is to make an End of Sin, that made way for Swearing, and introduce that Everlasting Righteousness which never needs it; The Religion he taught, is no less then Regeneration and Perfection; such Veracity as hath not the least Wavering; Sincerity throughout, that it might not only exceed the Righteousness of the Swearing Jews, but that Law which permitted it till the Times of Restitution, which he brought to the Degenerated World, who said, *Swear not at all*; for the Law that permitted Oaths, was given by Moses; but Grace and Truth, that ends them, came by Jesus Christ, who therefore prohibits them. And not only is this Gospel of Christ, or the Holy Religion he taught, of so pure and excellent a Nature; but those who will be his Disciples, are obliged to obey it, insomuch that he himself hath said, *If ye love me, keep my Commandments*; and if ye keep my Commandments, ye shall abide in my Love. Again, *Ye are my Friends*, if ye do whatsoever I command you: If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his Cross, and follow me: For I say unto you, that *whosoever* Mat. 16. 24.  
*your Righteousness shall exceed the Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no Case enter the Kingdom of Heaven*: Be ye therefore Perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect. These are the weighty Sayings of our Blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; and certainly, he who breaks not the least Commandment (Forbidden Vers. 19.) who can Suffer rather then Revenge, love Enemies, and be perfect as his Heavenly Father is perfect, is above the Obligation of an Oath unto Truth.

*Truth-Speaking.* His Disciples preach not another Gospel then their Master's, who prayed, that those who believed might be sanctified **THROUGHOUT**, in Body, Soul and Spirit, which is a perfect Removal of the Ground of Swearing; and they were exhorted to press after the Mark of the Price of this High and Holy Calling, until they should all come unto a perfect Man, unto the Measure of the Stature of the Fulness of Christ Jesus: For even hereunto (saith Peter) were ye called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an Example, that ye should follow his Steps, who did no Sin, neither was Guile found in his Mouth: And saith John, As he is, so are we in this World. If No Guile be found in our Mouths, then No Oaths; for they came because of Guile: And if we ought to resemble him in this World, then must our Communication be *Yea, Yea, and Nay, Nay*; that is, we must live the Life of Truth, and speak the Words of Truth, which ought to be of greater Force then Oaths, that come of Evil. If the Righteousness of the Law ought to be fulfilled in us, we ought not to swea, because we ought to be so Righteous as not to Lye. This is Evangelical; for as he that conceives not a foul or revengeful Thought, need not to purge himself of Adultery and Murder: Neither is there any Reason, that man should purge himself of Lying by Swearing, that doth not so much as countenance an untrue Thought. The Language of the same Apostle to the Ephesians further explains this Evangelical Evidence, But ye have not so learned Christ, if so be that ye have heard him, & have been taught by him, as the Truth is in Jesus; That ye put off concerning the former Conversation, the Old Man, which is Corrupt, according to the Deceitful Lusts, & be renewed in the Spirit of your Mind, & that you put on the New Man, which after God is created in Righteousness and true Holiness: Wherefore **PUTTING AWAY LYING, SPEAK EVERY MAN TRUTH** with his Neighbour: Beyond which, there can be no Assurance given or desired. And if Christians ought never to Lye, it is most certain they need never to Swear; for Swearing



is built upon *Lying*; Take away *Lying*, and there re-  
 mains no more Ground for *Swearing*; *Truth-speaking*  
 comes in the room thereof: And this not only the *Chri-  
 stian Doctrine* teaches and requires; but *Christ*, the  
 blessed Author of it, is ready to *work in the Hearts* of the  
*Children of Men*, would they but come and learn of him,  
*who is Meek, Lowly, filled with Grace and Truth*.  
 And we must needs say, It is a shameful thing, and very  
 Dishonourable to the Christian-Religion, that those who  
 pretend themselves to be the Followers of *Christ*, for so  
 true Christians ought to be, should so degenerate from his  
 Example and Doctrine as to want and use swearing Affe-  
 verations, dispenced with in some of the weakest Times  
 of Knowledge, and such horrible Imprecations (never  
 known to ancient *Jews* and *Christians*) to ascertain one  
 another of their Faith and Truth: Religion must needs  
 have suffered a great Ebb, and *Christianity* a fearful Eclips  
 since those brighter Ages of its Profession: For Bishop  
*Gauden* himself, in his Discourse of *Oaths*, confesses, That  
 the ancient Christians were so strict and exact, that there  
 was no need of an Oath among them; yea, they so kept up  
 the Sanctity and Credit of their Profession among Unbeliev-  
 ers, that it was Security enough in all Cases to say, *Chri-  
 stianus sum, I am a Christian*.

But to fortifie what we have hitherto urged in Defence  
 of our Judgment and Practice; and to the End it may  
 more fully appear, that our Tenderness in this great Case  
 of *Oaths* comes not from any Sower, Sullen or Supersti-  
 tious Humor, or that we would trouble the World with  
 any New-fangled Opinion; we shall produce the concu-  
 rent Testimonies of several Famous and Good Men for  
 above these Two Thousand Years, among *Gentiles*, *Jews*  
 and *Christians*, enough to make an *Oecumenical Council*;  
 We shall cite them out of the best Editions we have been  
 able to procure, and as truly and punctually as we can  
 render them, digested in Order of Time,

## Memorable TESTIMONIES

against Swearing, collected out of the Writings of Gentiles, Jews & Christians: some of which were deliver'd to the World several Ages before Swear not at all was writ by Matthew, or spoken by Christ: which makes Swearing, but especially Punishing for not Swearing, among Christians, so much the more Disallowable.

The Whole publisht not only in Favour of our Cause, but for the Instruction of the World, and to their Just Honour that said & writ them, as durable Monuments of their Virtue.

### I. The Sayings of the Gentiles or Heathens, in Dislike of Oaths.

Our two first Testimonies shall be the Practice of two great People, the Persians and Scythians.

*Diodorus Siculus, lib. 16.*

These Nations were many Hundred Years before Christ.

I. **A**mong the Persians, saith *Diodorus Siculus*, Giving the Right Hand was the Token of Truth-speaking: He that did it Deceitfully, was counted more Detestable then if



(49)  
‘If he had Sworn. Which plainly impliyes,  
that Swearing was Detested among them, as  
well as that they needed not to Swear, who so  
much used Truth-speaking.

*Quint. Curt. in vit. Alex.*

II. The *Scythians*, as it is reported by *Q. Curtius*,  
in their Conference with *Alexander*, upon Occa-  
sion of an expected Security, told him, ‘Think  
‘not that the *Scythians* confirm their Friendship by  
‘Oath, They Swear by keeping their Word. Which is  
not only a Proof of their Disuse of Common  
Oaths, but Swearing at all, even in Matters of  
greatest Importance.

*Plutarch Rom. Quest. 28.*

III. ‘So Religious was *Hercules*, saith *Plutarch*, Liv’d before  
‘that he never swore but once. If it was Religiously Christ about  
done to swear but once in a Man’s Life, it had 1280. years;  
been more Religiously done nor to swear at all. being in the  
How just and severe a Censure is this out of an dayes of Gen.  
*Heaven’s* Mouth upon the Practice of Dissolute de on, Judg.  
*Christians*? 8.

*Hesiod Theogon. p. 88.*

IV. *Hesiod* in his *Theogonia* places an Oath a- Bes. Christ  
mongst the *Brood of Contention*; ‘An Oath, saith he, 800. years;  
‘greatly hurts men. Again presently, ‘An Oath goes in the dayes  
‘with corrupt Judgments; or an Oath flies away of *Hesiod* To-  
together with corrupt Judgments, that is, when it 1000. dayes.  
Justice appears among men, Oaths vanish, as his  
Scope in that place shews.

*Sacred.*

*Scriad.* in Stob. 28.

1<sup>st</sup> Bef. Christ 620. years; *Seven Sages*, so famous in Greece, 'That men ought in the dayes *not to Swear.*  
of *Josiah.*

*Stob.* Serm. 3.

V I. *Solou*, the famous Law-giver of *Athens*, and one of those *Seven Sages*, exhorted the People to 'observe *Honesty* more strictly than an Oath. As if he had said, *Honesty* is to be preferred before Swearing, as another Saying of his imports, 'A good Man should have that Reputation, as not to need 'an Oath; it is a Diminution to his Credit to be put to 'Swear, *Bp. Gaud. of Oaths*, p. 41.

*Theognis* ver. 660.

1<sup>st</sup> Bef. Christ 593. years. V I I. *Theognis*, the Greek Poet, writing of a Person Swearing, saith, 'Neither ought he to 'swear this or any thing: This Thing or Swearing (it 'self) shall not be. What is this less then, Swear not at all?

*Valer. Max.* lib. 8. cap. 18. *Laert. Hermip. & Orig.*  
contr. *Cels.*

1<sup>st</sup> Bef. Christ 590. years; These Three Persons liv'd in the time of *Jeremiah* and *Ezekiel*. V I I I. *Pythagoras*, a Grave and Virtuous Person, being earnestly intreated of the *Crotonian-Senators* for his Advice in things relating to the Government, did in his Oration, among other Excellent Sentences, with more then ordinary Emphasis, lay this down in the Nature of a Maxim,

' *Lo*

*Let naman attest God by an Oath, though in Courts  
of Judicature; but use to speak such things, as that he  
may be credited without an Oath.*

*H. Grot. on Mat. 5. 34.*

**IX.** *Clineas*, a Just Greek, and Follower of *Pythagoras*, out of Love to Truth, and Respect he bore his Master's Doctrine, that injoynd him to fear and shun an Oath, chose to pay Three Talents, which amount to about Three Hundred Pound, rather then he would take any Oath: Whose Example *Basilius Magnus* upbraided the Christians of his Time with, that were then learning to Swear.

Ref. Christ  
160 years.

*Hierocles* Comment in *Carm. Pythag.* p. 28.

**X.** *Hierocles* testifies, That *Pythagoras*, in enjoying them to revere an Oath, not only prohib-  
its Forswearing, but requires them also to abstain  
from Swearing.

Ref. Christ  
422 years;  
in the time  
of Abasim-  
rus, Exro 4.

And *Ashilus* makes a sincere Beckon to a Matter a firm Oath.

*Stobaeus* Sermt. 114.

**XI.** *Socrates*, that worthy Gentle, and great Promoter of Virtue among the *Athenians*, among many Excellent Sentences delivered this, That Good Men must let the World see, how that their Man-  
ners or Dealings are more firm then an Oath. Which both proves that he saw a more Excellent Righteousness then Swearing Truth it self, and believed it attainable; for he manifestly exhorts

Ref. Christ  
422 years;  
in the dayes  
of Haggai &  
Zachariah.

Good

292 (32)  
Good Men to that Integrity, which is a greater Caution then an Oath. He was put to Death for testifying against the *Heathen* Idols, acknowledging one only God.

*Plut. in Lacon. Epoph.*

Bef. Christ XII. *Lysander*, the great Spartan Captain, 400. years. thought an Oath of so little Value in comparison of Truth, that he bestowed this contemptuous Saying upon Swearing, '*Children are to be deceived with Toys, and Men with Oaths.* Implying, that Sincerity is a greater Security then an Oath.

*Isocr. ad Demon.*

Bef. Christ XIII. *Isocrates*, a Greek Orator, in his Oration to *Demonium*, advises, '*Not to take an Oath for Money Matters.* Also he teaches, '*That Good Men should shew themselves more credible then an Oath.*'  
394. years. These two lived in the days of *Ma-lachi*.

*Plat. de Leg. 12.*

Bef. Christ XIV. *Plato* (call'd Divine) forbids Swearing in solemn Cases, '*That none swear himself; That none require an Oath of another.* He speaks there, how '*Rhadamanthus* brought in Swearing by the Gods; but that his Art therein was not agreeable to that Time (it seems he accounted it an Art of Policy) '*But that in all Actions or Causes, Laws which are made with Understanding, should take away Swearing from both Adversaries.*'  
366. years.

versaries. For (saith he) it is an Horrible Thing, that when many Judgments are done in a City, well near half the People are forsworn in them—Therefore let the Presidents of Judgments not permit any to swear in Actions, nor even for Persuasions sake; but that he persevere in that which is Just, with a fixing Speech, &c.

Valer. Max. 10. Cic. pro Corn. Balb. Diog. Laert. in vit. Xenocr.

XV. *Xenocrates* was so renowned at *Athens*, Bef. Christ for his Virtuous Life and great Integrity, that 337. Years. being called to give his Evidence by Oath, all the Judges stood up and forbade the Tender, because they would not have it thought, that Truth depended more upon an Oath, then the Word of an Honest Man.

*Menander.*

XVI. *Menander*, the Greek Poet, saith, Bef. Christ 336. Years. *° Flee an Oath; though thou shouldst swear justly.*

*Cherillus in Perseid.*

XVII. *Cherillus* saith, *° Oaths bring not Credit to the Man, but the Man must bring Credit to the Oath.* What serve they for when we Deceive? It seems by this, that Credit is better then an Oath; for it is the Credit that is the Security, not the Oath.

Stobaeus in Jur. c. 27.

XVIII. *Alexides* in *Olynth*, saith, 'A Wise Man ought alwayes to give Credit, not to Swearers, but to the Things themselves. Then Oaths are vain, for it is not the meer Oath, but the Likelihood of the Truth of the Evidence, from the Consideration and Comparing of the Circumstances, that turns the Scale.

*Simocatus*. Epist. 33. F.

XIX. *Simocatus*, 'Perfidiousness appears securer then Faithfulness, and an Oath imposed is a fit Engin for Deceit. Strangel that faithful Yea and Nay is stoppt, when Perfidiousness with an Oath can pass all Guards, Courts and Offices. He manifestly links Oaths and Perfidiousness, and gives the Praise to Faithfulness.

*H. Graec.* on *Mat.* 5.

XX. *Epictetus*, a famous and grave Stoick, counsell'd, 'to Refuse an Oath **ALTOGETHER**.

*Quint.* l. 8.

XXI. *Quintillian* saith, that 'in Time past 'it was a kind of Infamy for Graves and Approved Men to Swear, as if their Authority should suffice for Credit: Therefore the Priests or *Flamins* were not compelled to it, for then to compel a Noble Man to Swear, were like putting him upon the Rack, &c. Which shows an Oath to be an Unnatural

natural and Extorſing Way of Evidence, and  
that they preferred Virtue and Truth before an  
Oath.

Plutarch Rom. queſt. 44.

XXII. Plutarch in his 44th Rom. qu. upon  
the Cuſtom of the Romans, holding it Unlawful  
for the *Flamen Dialis*, or Chief Priest, to Swear,  
puts the Queſtion, 'Why is it not Lawful for Ju-  
piter's Priest to Swear? Is it becauſe an Oath  
miniſtered unto Freemen is as it were the Rack &  
Torture tendered unto them? For, certain it is,  
that the Soul, as well as the Body of the Priest  
ought to continue free, and not be forced by any  
Torture whatſoever; or for that it is not meet  
to Diſtruſt or Diſcredit him in ſmall Matters,  
who is believed in Great and Divine Things?  
or rather becauſe every Oath endeth with De-  
ſtation and Malediction of Perjury? And conſide-  
ring that all Maledictions be odious and abomi-  
nable, therefore it is not thought good, that  
any other Priests whatſoever ſhould Curſe, or  
pronounce any Malediction: And in this reſpect  
was the Prieſteſs of *Minerva* in *Athens* highly  
commended, for that ſhe would never curſe *Al-  
cibiades*, norwithſtanding the People comman-  
ded her ſo to do; For I am (quoth ſhe) ordai-  
ned a Prieſteſs to pray for Men, and not to curſe  
them. Or laſt of all, was it, becauſe the Peril  
of Perjury would reach in common to the whole  
Common-wealth, if a Wicked, Godleſs and



“Forsworn Person should have the Charge and  
 “Superintendence of the Prayers, Vows and Sa-  
 “crifices made in the behalf of the City? Thus  
 far *Plutarch*, whose Morals have the Praise among  
 all the Writings of *Philosophers*; who is also com-  
 mended himself very highly for his Virtue and  
 Wisdom. See his Life.

*M. Aur. Ant.* in Descript. bon. Vir.

XXIII. *M. Aurelius Antoninus*, that Philo-  
 sophical Roman Emperor, in his Description of  
 a Good Man, says, “*That the Integrity of a truly*  
 “*good man is such, that there is no need of an Oath for*  
 “*him.* Certainly then he was far from imposing  
 Oaths upon his People, who both by his Exam-  
 and Precept prefer’d Integrity before an Oath.

*Libanius.*

XXIV. *Libanius*, a Greek Orator, though  
 otherwise no Admirer of *Christians*, reckons this  
 amongst the Praises of a *Christian* Emperor; “*He*  
 “*is (says he) so far from being blackt with Perjury,*  
 “*that he is even afraid to swear the Truth.* It seems  
 then, they swore not in his time; and that *Li-*  
*banius*, an Enemy to *Christians*, prefer’d and ad-  
 mired *Swear not at all.*

*Auson. Epist. 2.*

XXV. We shall conclude with *Auson-*  
*us*, whose Saying seems to be all contract-  
 ed, or those other Testimonies digested into  
 one

(17)  
one Axiom, that is, 'To swear or speak falsely, is  
'one and the same thing.

These are the Reflections upon Oaths we receive from  
Heathens, who by the Light they had, both discerned  
the Scope of the Evangelical Doctrine, Swear not at all,  
preceptively laid down by Christ our Lord, *Mat. 5. 34.*  
and prest it earnestly: And which is more to their Ho-  
nour, but to the Christians Shame, several of them li-  
ved it sincerely.

## II. Testimonies from the Jews in Dislike of all Swearing.

*H. Gror. Com. on Mat. 5. 34.*

XXVI. *Maimonides*, out of the most anci-  
ent of the Jewish Rabbies extracts this memorable  
Axiom, 'IT IS BEST FOR A MAN  
'NOT TO SWEAR AT ALL.

*Raimund. p. 135.*

XXVII. *Raimundus* quotes him thus, 'Maimonides in tract. de juramentis; IT IS A great Good  
'GREAT GOOD FOR A MAN NOT TO at all; what  
'SWEAR AT ALL; The ancient and lawful Do- is it to Im-  
'ctrine of the Synagogue. pose an Oath?

*Joseph. de bello Judaico l. 2. c. 7.*

XXVIII. 'The Essent or Essaims (saith Jo-  
sephus) 'keep their Promise, and accounts every Word  
'they speak of more force then if they had bound it  
'with an Oath, and they shun Oaths more then Ceremonies  
'for

2925 *for they esteem him condemned for a Liar, who is not believed without calling God to witness.*

*These Essaans were the most Religious of the Jewish People, though the Pharisees made the greatest Noise amongst the Rabble.*

*Philo de decalogo, p. 583.*

XXIX. *Philo, that excellent Jew, relates thus much concerning the same Essaans, That whatsoever they said, was firmer then an Oath; And that to Swear was counted amongst them a thing superfluous.*

*Philo Judaeus on Com. 3d.*

XXX. The same *Philo* himself thus taught in his Treatise on the Ten Commandments; *Commandment 3d. Thou shalt not take the Name of God in vain: Many Ways (saith he) do men sin against this Commandment; so THAT IT IS BETTER NOT TO SWEAR AT ALL, but so well accustom thy self to speak Truth alwaies, that thy Bare Word shall have the Force and Virtue of an Oath. It is become a Proverb, That to swear well and holily is a second Voyage; for he that sweareth is suspected of Lying and Perjury. It is, saith he, most profitable and agreeable to the reasonable Nature, to abstain ALTOGETHER from Swearing. Whatsoever a godly Man speaks, let it go for an Oath.*

The Wisdom and Moderation of this worthy Personage reflects just Blame upon those that Pillage their Neighbours, because they Conscientiously Refuse an Oath: But that men, who pretend to be the Disciples of Jesus Christ, should commit these Cruelties, aggravates their

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their Evils, and doubt less their Guilt. How can they ever hope to look their Lord with Comfort in the Face, who so severely Treat their Fellow-Servants? Certainly *Jews* and *Heathens* will one Day rise up in Judgment against such *Christians*, for their Unnatural Carriage towards their Brethren: This is not to Love Enemies, but injure Friends. *Jews* and *Heathens* are become Names of Reproach; yet to the Rebuke of *Christians*, as they call themselves, they not only discern'd the Rise and Ground of Oaths, but the Evil of using them, even while they were tolerated; and both avoided them, and exhorted others to that Integrity which had no need of them.

These Testimonies, though they are of Weight with us, and we hope they will have a due Impress upon the Minds of many of our Readers; yet because nothing produced out of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, may advance our Cause with some, or render it ever the more acceptable, We shall next betake our selves to the more *Christian* Ages of the World, for Approbation of our Judgment, who we are sure will kindly entertain us, their Liberality being Extraordinary to our Cause; and from whom we shall never want *Votes* for **SWEAR NOT AT ALL**, while their Works are in the World: May our *Superiors* joyn theirs with them, and we have Reason to believe, that our Deliverance from the Yoke of Oaths will be the happy Issue of this necessary Address.

Testimonies.

### III. Testimonies from *Christians*, both *Fathers*, *Doctors* and *Martyrs*, in Dislike of *All Swearing*.

*Polycarpus*.

XXXI. The first Testimony recorded against Swearing, after the Apostles Times, was that of *Polycarpus*, who had lived with the Apostles, and was said to have been Disciple to *John*, not the least of the Apostles, for at his Death, when the Governour bid him Swear, *Defie Christ*, &c. he said, *Fourscore and Six Years have I served him, yet hath he never offended me in any thing. The Proconsul still urged and said, Swear by the Fortune of Caesar; to whom Polycarpus answered, If thou requirest this Vain-glory, that I Protest the Fortune of Caesar, as thou sayest, feigning thou*

*Enseb. Eccl. knowest not who I am, hear freely, I AM A*  
*Hist. lib. 4. cap. 15. CHRISTIAN.* This Good man began his

*Fourscore and Six Years*, which was about *Twenty Years* after *James* wrote *Above all things, my Brethren, Swear Not*; and several years before *John* the Apostle deceased; for he is called his Disciple. See his History and Commendation in *Ensebins*.

We know it is objected by some, That he refused to Swear only because he could not swear by that Oath, which is a Guess, and no Confutation of what we alledge: But if that had been *Polycarpus's* Reason, why did he not rather say, The Law of God forbids Swearing by Idols?

'Tis

It is certain, the first *Christians* would not Swear, but thought *Polycarpus's* Answer Security enough to them that demanded their Oath; He refused all Oaths as a *Christian*; therefore saying, he was a *Christian*, was Reason sufficient why he would not take that Oath.

*Justin Martyr*, Apol. 2. pro *Christianis*, ad Anton. Pium  
oper. p. 63.

XXXII. It was some time before his Suffering that *Justin Martyr*, who is the first we find writing of it, publisht an *Apology* for the *Christians* in the year 150. as himself saith, and a second after that, wherein he tells us, after the Doctrine of his Master, 'That we should NOT SWEAR AT ALL, but alwayes speak the Truth. He, that is, Christ, hath thus commanded, SWEAR NOT AT ALL; but let your YEA be YEA, and your NAY, NAY; and what is more then these is of Evil. See his Praise and Martyrdom in *Eusebius*, soon after *Polycarpus*.

*Euseb. Eccl. Hist. lib. 5. c. 1.*

XXXIII. 'Under the same Emperor (says *Eusebius*) 'suffered also *Ponticus*, of Fifteen Years of Age, and *Blandina*, a Virgin, with all kind of Bitter Torments; the Tormentors now and then urging them to Swear, which they constantly Refused.

*Euseb. ibid. lib. 6. cap. 4.*

XXXIV. And in the next Emperor's Reign, *Basiliides*, a Souldier of Authority amongst

the Host, being appointed to lead *Potamiana* to Execution, and by her convinced of the Truth in Christ; was after a while required to Swear; But he affirmed plainly, *It was not law-ful for him to Swear; for (said he) I am a Chri-stian.* He did not lay the Unlawfulness upon that Oath, but upon Swearing at all. The History only sayes, His Companions would have him swear upon some occasion or other, not menti-oning by what; His Answer was, *It is Unlawful for me to Swear;* and why; because, saith he, *I am a Christian.* The Consequence is plain, *Christi-ans* took no Oaths, therefore not their Oaths.

*Tert. Apol. pro Christianis advers. gent. cap. 32.*

**Tertullian**  
was a Law-  
yer, Son to a  
Centurion of  
Pro-consular  
Dignity. See  
his Life.

XXXV. In the same Emperor's Reign lived *Tertullian*, a strict and learned Man, who wrote a very notable *Apology* for the *Christians*, wherein he answers the Objection of the *Heathen*, who accused them of not being Well-wishers to the Emperor, nor *Cesar's* Friends, in that they refused to Sacrifice and Swear by the *Genius*, *Fortune* and *Health* of the *Emperor* (we begin with this because it is urged by some against us) saith he, *We do Swear, as not by the Genius of the Cæsars, so by or for their Safety, which is more August then all Genius's or Petty Gods; for we reverently look up unto the Judgment of God in the Emperors, who hath set them over the Nations; and we know that to be in them which God wills, and what God wills, that we will so be safe (that God save it) Hoc saluum esse.*



esse volumus, et pro magno id iuramento habemus, i. And that we account for a great Oath, or that we have instead of a great Oath; namely, our Well-wishing to Cæsar: the thing that was desired, the Substance of the Oath, that Oath which the Pythagoreans said was in all reasonable Creatures, viz. a full Resolution of Mind not to transgress the Law of God, which Tertullian saith here they had Respect to; That Oath which a Just Man sweareth by his Deeds, as Clemens Alexandrinus speaks. In like manner Tertullian sayes, to Scapula, 'We do Sacrifice for the Health of the Emperor, but that Way that God pleases, by pure Prayer, so sayes he, 'Here we do swear by the Health of the Emperor, by willing his Health, and I do work for the Health of the Emperor, for I commend him to God' Otherwise, if we take the Words of this Doctor strictly and properly, who in writing is difficult, as Scultetus notes, and obscure, as Lactantius sayes, we shall both cross the Scope of the Place, and accuse him and the Primitive Christians and Martyrs of his time, not only of Swearing, but Sacrificing for the Health of the Emperor, neither of which do we ever read they did, nor as much as offered to do, had they, doubtless we should have heard of some Release or Favour shewn them on that Condescension: Besides we shall also make him to contradict himself (which Scultetus accuses him not of, in this) For in his Book de idololatria, he speaks without any Obscurity, saying, 'I speak not of Perjury,

Rigaltius adds, 'I will speak plainly, that the Emperor is not to be worshipped, but only for the common manner.

Tertul. ad Scap. c. 1, 2.

Apol. c. 33.

'I do offer Sacrifice by Prayer, c. 30.

Tertul. de

'seeing cap. 11.

saying it is not Lawful to Swear. And in Chap.  
 23. he proves, That he which signs a Bill  
 of Security containing and confirmed by  
 an Oath, is guilty of Swearing, as if he had  
 spoken it, and transgresses Christ's Command, who  
 hath prescribed not to swear. He is before speak-  
 ing of the Idolatry, Christians are obnoxious to in  
 regard of Employments, as School-Masters by  
 reason of Heathenish Books and Customs; and Mer-  
 chants or Traffickers of Covetousness and Lying;  
 not to speak of Forswearing, saith he, SEEING  
 IT IS NOT LAWFUL SO MUCH AS  
 TO SWEAR; which if any should do, he  
 should surely be the Servant of Covetousness,  
 in undertaking an unlawful Practice for Gain,  
 as he sayes Lying was; but if they should also  
 Forswear, so adding Swearing to Lying, that should  
 be a Servant of Servants to Covetousness, that is Idola-  
 try: Which if Christians had committed indeed,  
 it is unlikely that Tertullian would have made such  
 a sleight and short preterition with a Sentence of  
 Eight Words. And further observe, that both  
 Tertullian and the Martyrs make use of the most  
 Universal Proof, to make their Testimony for  
 God full and compleat. And though their E-  
 nemies Tryal of them were short of proving them  
 Christians, and distinguishing them from Jews;  
 yet in the Wisdom of God, their Answer and  
 Argument being General and Christian, inclu-  
 ding the Special and Jewish, proves them not on-  
 ly true Jews, who were forbidden by God to For-  
 swear,

swear, or to Swear by Idols; but true *Christians*, not to swear, because it was unlawful; for Christ had forbidden it: And as his Argument in the *Apology* aforesaid, was, *It is Unlawful to Swear, much more so Forswear*; so here, Christ (saith he) hath prescribed not to Swear, then sure not to Swear and subscribe *Gentile Oaths*. So *Basilides*, Because I am a Christian, it is not lawful for me to swear, then not your Oath: this is the just Sense and Consequence of it. And said *Polycarp*, I would have thee to know, that I am a Christian, and the Doctrine thereof, if thou wilt appoint a Time, I shall teach thee (that is, not to swear) therefore it is in vain for thee to bid me swear, and desire Christ: So *Blandina* and *Ponticus* were urged to Swear (by what it is not said, and it matters not) but in vain; for they were *Christians*: We do not read that any used the *Jewish Argument*, the old Commandment, *Thou shalt not Swear by Idols*; but the *Christian Argument*, the new Commandment; *It is not lawful to Swear, Christ forbid it, I am a Christian, &c.*

And to this Purpose speaks *Le Prieur* on this Place of *Tertullian*, in his Annotations (which the Publishers desired because of his Obscurity; see their Preface) 'Although, sayes he, the Christians did believe that All Swearing was Forbidden them, they before all Oaths were aware of Swearing by the Genius, or Fortune of the Prince. Here he confesses they were aware of All Swearing, much more that which was never lawful, &c.

to wit, *Swearing by Idols*. And thereupon he brings the Example of *Polycarpus*: But if all Oaths, then of Swearing by the Health of the Emperour; for that was an Oath. And this *African* Writer's intricate Sense (as the Publisher's Terms are) must needs be in this as in the other, all along mystical: and as he sayes a little before, *I offer a Sacrifice (oratione) by Prayer*; so going along he sayes, *We Swear*, *juramus*, i. *jure oramus*; for so *Bruno* & *Cassiodorus* derive the Word, *Furare dictum est, quasi jure orare, hoc est, jure loqui*.

*Bruno and Cassiodorus on Psalm 14. & Psalm 61.*

This *Cassiodorus* was a *Roman Senator & Counsellor of Theodoricus*, about the year 490.

Again, *Pf. 61*. 'They swear in God, or to God, or by God, who Promise an inviolable Obedience of Mind to him. *Furare* to swear (saith he) 'is, *jure orare*, to speak Equity, that he will not decline to another Party, from what he hath promised. Again, 'Here Swearing is firmly in mind to resolve to fulfil the good Purpose. And that this must be *Tertullian's* Sense, not only the Scope (for which see *Scultetus* on the Place) but his Explanation of it, by *willing what God wills, and that to be to them for a great Oath*; plainly declares to sagacious Readers, and such *Tertullian's African* Speech requires, as *Rigaltius*

\* There are about 2000. Corruptions in Tertullian's Works.

sayes of his Writings, which have been \* altered of them that could not comprehend them. But is it likely that a Man so severe, that condemned the very subscribing of a Writing where in an Oath was contained, and for this Reason, *because Christ forbade to Swear at all*, and thought it needless

needless to speak of Perjury, because it was not  
lawful to swear, should yet allow it in himself and  
others to swear even by that which was not God?  
Besides, Suarez reckons him amongst those Fathers  
who were more especially against Swearing.

Suarez. de  
Juram. c. 2.

Thus are the Conspirers against this part of  
the Doctrine of Christ, and his Apostles, Primi-  
tive Fathers and Martyrs, forc'd out of that  
Sanctuary they betook themselves to, in the  
Sentence of this intricate Doctor.

*Clem. Alex. Strom. l. 7.*

XXXVI. *Clemens Alexandrinus*, his Con-  
temporary, famous for Learning and Strict Li-  
ving, to help him in his Mystical Meaning of  
an Oath, sayes, "He who is once a Believer,  
'why shall he make himself an Unbeliever, as  
'that he hath also need to Swear, and doth not keep Com-  
'so lead his Life, that the same (so wit, his Life) pany with  
'be a firm and definite Oath, and show the Faithful-  
'ness of Confession in a constant and stable Speech —  
'Far be it, that he who is approved and discern-  
'ed in such Piety, should be propense to Lye  
'or to Swear — He who liveth justly, trans-  
'gressing in nothing of these things that should to turn In-  
'be done, the same sweareth truly and holily by  
'his Deeds and Works (Mark how this agrees  
with *Tertullian's* improper Swearing) 'the Testi-  
'mony of the Tongue is superfluous to him —  
'It sufficeth to add unto his Affirming or Deny-  
'ing this, viz. *I SPEAK TRULY*, that he begeth  
'Faith

\* Infidelity  
Swearing:  
And for a  
Christian to  
Swear, is  
with *Clem. Alexandr.*

'Faith in them who perceive not the Stability  
 'of his Answer : For it becometh him, as I  
 'judge (saith he) to have a Life worthy of  
 'Credit (or Faith) among those that are with-  
 'out, that an Oath be not sought from him—  
 'Neither doth he Swear, as being one, who hath  
 'determined to put for his Affirming **Y E A**, for his  
 'Denying **N A Y**.

—'Where is there any need of an Oath to him  
 'that so lives, as one that is attain'd to the height of  
 'Truth? He therefore that doth not Swear, is  
 'far from Forswearing: He that transgresseth in  
 'nothing that is covenanted and agreed, HE  
 '**MAY NEVER SWEAR.**

—'Seeing he is fully perswaded that God  
 'is every where, and is ashamed not to speak  
 'Truth, and professeth that it is a thing unbe-  
 'seeming, and unworthy for him to speak False;  
 'he is content with this, that God and his own  
 'Conscience know it, and therefore he doth not  
 'Lye, nor do any thing besides or against what is  
 'covenanted and agreed: By that means he nei-  
 'ther sweareth, if he be asked, nor denies, so as  
 'to speak false, though he dye upon the Rack for it.

Likewise in his 5th, 7th and 8th Books of  
 Strom. also in his 3d Book of his *Pedagogue* with  
 Gentianus Hervetus's Notes on it, 'where he for-  
 'bids to set Two Prices, and commands but one sin-  
 'gle one, and to speak Truth **WITHOUT** an Oath, &c.

Origen



XXXV. *Origin*, his Successor, a Man of equal Fame for Learning and Piety, succeeds him also in this Testimony concerning Swearing:

‘Because, saith he, the *Jews* have a Custom to swear by Heaven; to the fore-going (Prohibition) Christ added this also to reprove them, because they more easily swore by Heaven than by God; because he deals alike unreasonably, who sweareth by HEAVEN, as he that swears by the TEMPLE, or by the ALTAR, in that who sweareth by Heaven, seemeth to swear by him that sitteth in that Throne, and doth not escape Danger, as he thinks, because he sweareth not by God himself, but by the Throne of God: And these things he speaks to the *Jews*, forbidding them to give heed to the Traditions of the *Pharisees*; otherwise, before, HE MANIFESTLY FORBAD TO SWEAR AT ALL.

He makes two Prohibitions, as we do: 1. Swear not by God; 2. by no Creatures.

‘The Chief Priest said unto him, I adjure thee by the Living God, that thou tell us if thou be the Christ, the Son of God. *Ibid. Tract. 35.* Mar. 26.

‘In the Law we find the Use of Adjuring; The Priest shall adjure the Woman with the Adjurations of this Curse. *Num. 5. 19.*

‘Also *Ahab* said unto *Micah*, I adjure thee that thou tell me the Truth in the Name of the Lord. *1 King. 22. 16.*

‘The King adjured the Prophet, not by Command of the Law, but by his own Will. And now the Priest adjures Jesus by the Living God.

G

But



But I account that a Man that will live according to the Gospel, **MUST NOT ADJURE ANOTHER**: For it is even like that which the Lord himself forbids in the Gospel, **BUT I SAY UNTO YOU, SWEAR NOT AT ALL**. For all Swearing: if it be not lawful to swear, as to the Gospel with us; and Command of Christ, it is also true, that it is not lawful to Adjure another, or compel him to Swear.

Huetius upon him addeth, that Athanasius, Chrysostom, Epiphanius, Hilary, and many more were of the same Mind with him: and if so, we may without Offence add, upon that Respect our Superiors seem to carry to their Names, that it must needs be very remote from the Doctrine of the ancient Church, to fine, imprison, and bitterly treat those that for Conscience of that Gospel-Command do scruple an Oath in this Age.

Orig. on Jer.  
4, 1, 2.

If thou wilt return, O Israel, saith the Lord, and put away thy Abominations, then shalt thou not remove. And thou shalt swear the Lord liveth in Truth, and Judgment, and Righteousness.

Origen here tells us, 'That this is a Reproof of them that did not Swear in Judgment, but without Judgment: Howbeit, we know (saith he) that the Lord said unto his Disciples, **BUT I SAY UNTO YOU, SWEAR NOT AT ALL**. Perhaps formerly it behoved them to Swear in Truth, Judgment and Righteousness; that after any had given Proof of his Integrity, he might be thought worthy of being believed **WITHOUT**

WITHOUT ANY OATH AT ALL. But once  
having YEA, he needs no Witness that it is  
YEA; and having NAY, he needs no other  
Evidence to prove that it is NAY.

Thus doth *Origen* prefer and extol Evangelical Verity, wrapt up in solemn Yea or Nay, above the Swearing that was in Truth, Judgment and Righteousness under the Dispensation of the Law.

*Socrates Scholast.* lib. 4. cap. 22. of his Ecclesiastical History.

XXXVIII. *Gregory Thaumaturgus*, so called from his working of Miracles, on *Eccles.* lib. 46. cap. 8. saith, 'It is meet to give diligent heed to the Words of the King, and to flee an Oath by all means, especially that which is taken in the Name of God. See his great Praise, his Works and Miracles.

*Cyprian* Lib. 3. Testim. ad *Quirin.*

XXXIX. *Cyprian*, a famous Father, and faithful Martyr (who lived about the middle of the Age, in the beginning of which *Origen* flourished) in his third Book of Testimonies to *Quirinus*, 'Who hath desired me (said *Cyprian*) to draw out of the holy Scriptures certain Heads, belonging to the Religious Discipline of our Sect (for so he calleth his own, the Christian Religion) His 12th Head amongst them is, 'Not to Swear.

Again, Writing of Pastors and Teachers, *Cyp.* Epist. he bludgeth them, 'Remember what the Lord ad *Corn. n. 5.* taught.

taught, and said, *Let your saying be Yea, Yea, and Nay, Nay.*

Cyprian de  
Mortal.

In another Place he saith, *It is unlawful for any man to compel another to take an Oath.*

Hitherto the *Christians*, being under most cruel Sufferings, generally kept faithful to the Command of Christ in this Point; and so we find very little in their Writings about it, besides a simple and bare asserting of it as the Doctrine of Christ, *not to swear at all*, as well as it was of Moses, *not to swear falsely or vainly*; for more was no way needful, in that it was not Contested, but universally so Received. But after that *Christian-Emperors* had engaged themselves in Parties, then it seems many out of Flattery, and to engage them to their Sect, took Liberty to Swear, even by the Health of the Emperor, as is objected against us. by some out of *Eusebius*; but such he did not account Religious; neither that a Religious Part so to do, much less an *August Act*; and least of all, a *most August Act* of Divine Worship, as some would have it; seeing *Stobaeus* observes from him, That whereas many

*Euseb. apud* exhorted that they be honest and faithful in an Oath, he, *Stob. de Jure* for his part, esteemed it not the Part of a Religious Man, *jur. c. 27.* not to avoid even Swearing in self. And we believe it will

be a hard Matter to find any in the *Greek Church*, especially for the first Three Hundred Years, that would allow Swearing so large a Place in Sacred Things, yea, or in later Ages either, even in the *Latin Church*; nay, of those who have allowed it in some Cases, many or most of them have denyed it any Place at all in the Worship of God, as of it self, accounting it an *Abatement*, rather than an *Advancement* to Christianity, which no part of the true Worship of God can be. But some perhaps taking of *Tertullian's* word *Augustior*, or more August, (which he sayes, the Safety of the Emperor is, in Comparison of all the *Genius's*) to be the highest Act of God's

Worship,

Worship, they would have us swear by that, after the Example of those mention'd in some *Christian Emperors Times*. *Tertullian's* Sense we shall easily grant; for it is so, and we do so, in that we commend our Prince and Governours to God, to God only, with earnest and sincere Desires for his and their Safety, above all such Geni-  
us's, as *Tertullian* calls *Demonia*. But we justly deny upon the score of what we have made appear to the contrary, even from *Tertullian* himself, and others, That he, or the *Christians* in his time, or for Two Hundred Years before, or a Hundred Years after, did swear, as some would have us, *least of all as a most August* All of the Worship of God, without which all others are unacceptable; or that those who did swear afterwards were the most Religious; seeing *Eusebius* esteems otherwise, and not he only, but also those very Devout Men that we have already produced, besides many which might and may be mentioned: For, all that we have yet met with, in those Times, that speak of it, speak against it; and of the following Times Men of greatest Renown and Authority, labour'd with all Earnestness to expel *Oaths* the Society of *Christians*, and cure them of that Distemper by inculcating the Doctrine of Integrity, that needs no Oath; proving by holy Scripture, that it was the plain and absolute Law of Christ, that *Christians ought not to swear at all*; and by other Arguments, that the Original of Oaths was neither from God, nor good Men: But they crept into Use through the Corruption of Times, and meer Carelessness of Governments; for, when they could not trust one another, they called their God's to witness; but God separating *Abraham* and his Posterity from among them, to himself, the better to draw them from Idols, commanded them to swear by him only: as much as if he would have said; If you will Swear, let it be by my Name rather than Idols; that so you may, though it be after a mean manner, acknowledge a real Deity, the Only Lord of all: But how long was this Condescension to last?

But

But all the Fulness of Time came; That, with other Per-  
missions, removed all Swearing, Christ bringing men to the  
Truth in the inward Parts, as in the Beginning, before  
Swearing was in being; for from the Beginning it was  
not so.

But to shew what other *Fathers* Reasons & Testimonies  
against this *Heathenish* and *Jewish* Usage, indeed Bondage,  
were, at the coming in of the Apostacy, we shall begin  
with *Athanasius*, a Man that was in great Renown in the  
dayes of *Constantine* the Great, and whose Creed is the  
Faith and Test of *Christendom* at this day.

*Athanasius* on the Passion of *Christ*.

K L. 'The Evangelical Sentence of  
'the Lord is, *Let your Teas be Yea, and your Nays,*  
'*Nay*: Thus far we, who are in *Christ*, may  
'confirm our Words with Asseverations, and  
'with no further Progress let us flee to or approach  
'*Oaths*, that we alledge not God for Witness for  
'Corruptible Money's sake, especially since  
'*Moses* so sets down the Law, *Thou shalt not take*  
'*the Name of the Lord thy God in a vain thing*. For  
'if any one is plainly worthy to name God, he  
'is also worthy of Belief; For, whosoever is  
'meet for greater things, he will be much more  
'fit for less: On the contrary, if he be not wor-  
'thy Belief, that he may be credited without an  
'*Oath*, surely he is not one that is worthy to name God.  
'If he be not faithful in Word, how will God  
'by any means be the Witness of an *Oath* for  
'him, who is destitute of Faith, to which God  
'*hath Respect*? Again, *The Lord is nigh to all*  
'that

25  
 'that call upon him in Truth; By which alone the  
 'Lord can be called upon: Wherefore why do  
 'they swear by God, *who are not trusted even in small*  
 'Matters? Otherwise, an Oath is a Testimo- *Arbanasius*  
 'ny of Truth, and not a Judge of Busineses, sith *Abhorrence*  
 'men do swear, not that they may signifie Busi- *and Derision*  
 'nesses, but that they may confirm the Truth, *of Oaths.*  
 'and that they may shew, that those things  
 'which they produce, are without Lying: If  
 'therefore he that swears hath Faith and Truth,  
 'WHAT USE IS THERE OF AN OATH?  
 'But if he hath no Faith nor Truth, why do we  
 'undertake such an Impiety, that for poor silly  
 'Men, and those mortal too, we call to Witnesse GOD,  
 'that is above men? For if it be a base Part  
 'to call to witnesse an Earthly King to the lowest  
 'Judicatures, as one that is greater then both  
 'Actors and Judges, why do we cite him that is  
 'uncreated to created things, and make God to be  
 'despised of men? HOUT, that exceeds all In- *Arbanasius*  
 'quity and Audaciousness: What then is to be *his Reason*  
 'done? NO MORE, but that our YEA be YEA, *and Dislike*  
 'and our NAY be NAY, and in short, THAT *of Oaths.*  
 'WE DO NOT LYE. But if we shall seem to  
 'speak Truth, and imitate the true God, some  
 'perchance may thus contradict.

• If an Oath be forbidden to men, and a *Object;*  
 • man imitates God in not Swearing, how is it  
 • that God is related in the holy Scriptures to swear?  
 • For, he swore to Abraham, as Moses witnesseth:  
 • And it is written in the Psalms, The Lord swore,  
 • and:



and will not repent, &c. For these things seem  
 to be repugnant to the former; and that there-  
 by there is permitted to men a Liberty of Swear-  
 ing.

*Ans.*

But this is not so, nor can any think so:  
 For God sweareth by none; for how can he,  
 seeing he is Lord and Maker of all things? But  
 if any thing, this must be said, that *His Word is an*  
*Oath, inducing the Hearers by a sure Faithfulness, that*  
*what he promiseth & speaketh, shall certainly be effectu-*  
*ed; for God sweareth not as Man, but his Word to us*  
*is as an Oath for Verity.* And speaking to men, he  
 is said to swear: And this also the Saints do ut-  
 ter after the manner of men; that as they them-  
 selves speaking would have Credit to be given  
 them, so likewise they themselves should give  
 Credit to God: For, as a man's Word confir-  
 meth an Oath, so also those things that God  
 speaketh, because of the Firmness and Im-  
 mutability of his Will are to be reputed Oaths.  
 The same also that is there written confirm-  
 eth my Saying, *For the Lord hath sworn, and will*  
*not repent;* as a thing not to be retracted by Re-  
 penting, but certainly to be effected, according  
 to the Engagement of an Oath. This also God doth  
 declare in Genesis, saying, *I have sworn by myself:*  
 But that is not an Oath; for he swore not by ano-  
 ther, which is proper for an Oath, but by himself,  
 which contains not the Estimation of an Oath.  
 But this is done that the Sureness of his Promise may  
 appear; and how confidently that ought to be  
 believed

*Athanasius*  
 will not have  
 it, that God  
 ever swear;  
 properly &  
 strictly tak-  
 en; only in a  
 way of spea-  
 king, having  
 the Truth &  
 Immutabili-  
 ty of the tru-  
 est and grea-  
 test Oath



'believed which is spoken. That sweet  
'Psalmist will witness for me in his Psalm, cal-  
'ling God to mind, when he saith, *Where are*  
'*thy ancient Mercies, O Lord, which thou swearest to*  
'*David thy servant, in (or by) thy Truth?* For  
'God sweareth not by his Truth; But because  
'he, who is *True*, speaketh in his Word, That  
'to men is for an Oath unto Belief. So God  
'doth not swear after the manner of men:  
'neither must we be induced thereby to take  
'Oaths, but let us so Say, and so Do, and so  
'approve our selves in saying and doing, that we  
'need not an Oath for the Hearer, and that our  
'Words of themselves may have the Testimony  
'of Truth: For, by that Way we shall plainly  
'imitate God.

*Hilary on Mat. 5. 34.*

X L I. Hilary, a Father, very Famous in the  
dayes of *Constantine*, Son to *Constantine* (but an  
*Arrian*, and which was worse, a Persecutor, so  
that this Hilary was banished) in his Commen-  
tary on those words in *Matthew*, *To have heard*  
*that it was said to them of old, Thou shalt not For-*  
*swear thy self, &c.* thus expresseth himself. The  
'Law set a Penalty for Perjury, that the Consti-  
'ence of Religion or Fear of an Oath might re-  
'strain the Deceitfulness of Minds; (for the rude  
'and insolent People made frequent mention of  
'their God by a familiar Course of Swearing:  
'But Faith doth remove the Custom of an Oath,  
H making

(380)  
 'making the Business of our Life to be bet-  
 'tered in Truth, and laying aside the affecting  
 'to deceive; prescribing the Simplicity of Spea-  
 'king and Hearing, that what WAS, WAS;  
 'what WAS NOT, WAS NOT; that the Business  
 'of Deceiving might be apparent between IT  
 'IS, and IT IS NOT; and what is more, is all of  
 'Evil: For what is, is its Property always, that  
 'so it is; and what is not, is its Nature, that it is  
 'not: Therefore to them that live in the Simplicity  
 'of Faith, there is no NEED of the Religion (or  
 'Superstition) of an OATH; with whom always  
 'what is, IS; what is not, IS NOT: And by these  
 'both all their Words and Deeds are in Truth. Nei-  
 'ther by Heaven] God will only suffers us not to make  
 'Oaths to God, because all the Truth of God is to be  
 'held in the simplicity of our Word and Deed; but  
 'also condemneth the Superstition of old Disobedi-  
 'ence, &c.

This, if that  
 Clement,  
 should have  
 been first, be-  
 cause he liv'd  
 in Paul's  
 time; but we  
 were not wil-  
 ling to begin  
 our Testimo-  
 nies with a  
 Suspicion:  
 however it is  
 an Ancient  
 Writing.

Sanct. de Juram. l. 1. c. 3. 2.  
 X. L II. The next Testimony we shall pitch  
 upon in Confirmation of our Reasons, and the  
 Sense we take our Master's Precept in, *Swear not at  
 all*, is afforded us out of the Apostolical Institutions  
 ascribed to Clement Romanus, reported by Suarez,  
 in his Book *de Fundamentis*. Our Master (saith  
 Clement) hath commanded, that we SHOULD  
 NOT SWEAR, *ne, ne by the True God; but that*  
*our Word should be more credible than an Oath itself.*  
 Which is a plain Indication of the Apostolical

Do-

Doctrine to have been the absolute Prohibition  
 of Oaths, in that Sense wherein they were only  
 reputed *Lawful*, for if men ought not to Swear, no,  
 nor by the true God, then consequently by no  
 other Oath, as his following words not only im-  
 ply, but express, viz. *That the Word of a Chri-  
 stian should be more credible than an Oath is self.*  
 Again, *He that in the Law is established to Swear*, l. 6. c. 23.  
*and forbids False Swearing, commands also, NOT*  
*TO SWEAR AT ALL.*

LXIII. There is a Tract, call'd, *The Go-  
 spel of Nicodemus*: We know it is reputed spu-  
 rious, but that makes nothing against us; that dis-  
 tinguishes the *Author*, and not the *Writer*, for though  
*Nicodemus* never wrote such a Book, certain it is  
 that such a Book was written, which is in Favour  
 of Christianity, as then received: In the Place  
 cited *Pilate* is made to say, as I shew you by the  
*Heads of Cates*, that the best thing is that you say, &c.  
 They answer'd, *We have a Law, we will SWEAR*,  
*because it is a Sin.* Whoever wrote it, this be-  
 nefit cometh to our Argument, that the *Christi-  
 ans*, at that time, thought an Oath a Sin; for  
 it is not to be doubted, but he that gave that  
 Answer, knew it to be so: *For he* *Indicates*  
*of Christians, for he was therein to represent*  
*them.*

*Basilium Magnus on Psalm 14.*

*Socrat. Eccl.  
Hist. lib. 4  
cap. 21.*

XIV. *Basil*, called the Great, another Champion of the like Fame, and in the same time of *Valens*, the Persecuting *Arrian Emperor*, by whom he suffered Imprisonment and Cruel Threatnings (see their Praises in *Socrates Scholasticus*) on the 14th *Psalm*, with us the 15th, *He that sweareth, and deceiveth not his Neighbour*; so *Basil* hath it, and upon it these words:

‘Here he seemeth to allow an Oath to a Perfect Man, which in the Gospel is **ALTOGETHER** forbidden; *But I say unto you, not to Swear at all.*

‘What shall we say then?

‘That every where the Lord, as well in the old as in the new Law, hath the same Consideration of Commanding; for desiring to anticipate the Effects of Sins, and prevent them by Diligence, and to extinguish Iniquity at the first beginnings, As the old Law saith, *Thou shalt not commit Adultery*, the Lord saith, *Thou shalt not Lust*: The old Law saith, *Thou shalt not Kill*, the Lord ordaining Perfection, saith, *Thou shalt not be Angry*: So also in this place, the Prophet indeed seemeth to assent to an Oath; but the Lord, to take away all Occasion of Perjury, and willing to prevent the Dangers of Swearers, takes away Swearing **ALTOGETHER**: For he names an Oath in many places the immutable and firm Constancy of any thing

‘thing or purpose. I have sworn, and have sted-  
‘fastly purposed to keep the Judgments of thy Right-  
‘eousness: Also, The Lord hath sworn, and will not  
‘repent. Not that David brought the Lord for  
‘a Witness of his Sayings, and to get Belief to  
‘his Doubting, but that he confirmed the Grace  
‘of his Profession by an Immutable and firm De-  
‘cree: so also he could have said here, that is,  
‘He that sweareth, and deceiveth not his Neighbour,  
‘that it may agree with the Saying of our Savi-  
‘our, Let your Word be YEA, YEA; NAY, NAY.  
‘To things that are, thou mayst affirm and assent,  
‘but of things that are not, although all men  
‘urge thee, yet thou mayst never be drawn by  
‘any means to affirm against the Nature of the  
‘Truth: Is the thing not done, let there be a  
‘Denial; is it done, let it be affirmed by Word.  
‘And he that shall not assent to him so affirming,  
‘let him look to it, and feel the Harm of his Un-  
‘belief. It is a base and a very foolish thing to  
‘accuse one’s self, as one unworthy of being believed,  
‘and to betake and refer one’s self to the Security of an  
‘Oath. Now, there are some Speeches which  
‘have the Forms of Oaths, and yet are no Oaths at  
‘all, but rather Remedies to persuade; as Joseph  
‘to make the Egyptian familiar with him, made  
‘by the Health of Pharaoh (myra vi live  
‘Pharaoh). And the Apostle, willing to shew his  
‘Love to the Corinthians, said, by the Obedience of  
‘you, which I have in Christ Jesus, as David. For  
‘he did not depart from the Doctrine of the Go-  
‘spel.

Pray mark  
where David  
layeth the  
Blame, if a  
Word go not  
for an Oath.  
Joseph swears  
not.  
Paul swears  
not.

Ad Nepotes.

above 300.l.

'*spol, who, by a thing before all most dear unto him, simply sought Belief to the Truth. He refused to swear at the Council of Chalcedon: And speaking of Clinias, a Pythagorean, who might have avoided a Multitude of Three Talents, if he would have sworn, which he rather suffered, saith, 'In keeping these things he seems to have heard that Command concerning an Oath that is forbidden us. And he upbraided the Christians of his time with it, that would swear.*

*Basil. Mag.*  
can. 29.

This Basil the Great, in his 29th Canon to *Amphilochius*, writes thus, 'Because an Oath is **TOGETHER FORBIDDEN**, such an one as is taken to an Evil Purpose, is much more to be condemned — Again, 'If an Oath, simply as such, be prohibited, of greater Reason when it is to effect some Mischievous End — The Cure consisteth in a twofold Admonition: 1. **NOT TO SWEAR**; 2. **TO SUPPRESS THE FORM OF OATHS**.

*Basil. Exposit.*  
ad Rom.  
ad Cor.

*Blasius Syntagma* Tit. E. c. 32.

**XLV.** There was an ancient Law made to this effect, 'It is **FORBIDDEN** to all, from the Bishop and Clergy-Men to the Readers, to **SWEAR AND OATH AT ALL**.

*Blasius* also brings in this Objection, 'But since those are punished who swear falsely, and those are praised by who swear well, some may say, *therefore it is permitted to swear.* To which he answers, 'But where shall we dispose, or how shall



shall we dispense with the **THAT FORNIE STARK**  
in the Gospel, **THAT FORNIE STARK**  
**INT OATH AT ALL** Adding, 'But I be- The Reason  
lieve that the Gospel endeavoured to root out of prohibi-  
that Wicked Stem (as I may say) which is in- ting Oaths.  
finitive, and **FOR THAT CAUSE PRO-**  
**HIBITED AN OATH**, which is as the  
'Woof or In-ter to Perjury.

Gregory Nissenus on Cant. vers. 13.

**XLVI.** Gregory Nissenus, Brother to Basil,  
spoken of by **Sextus Scythianus** in the same place,  
and in lib. 3. cap. 9. His Works are Famous:  
And in his Explanation on the **Canons**, he gives  
this Testimony upon us: 'He; who by **Moses**  
'established the Beginnings of the Law, by  
'himself fulfilled all the Law and the Prophets;  
'as he saith in the Evangelists: **I came not to destroy**  
'the Law, but fulfil it; who taking away Anger,  
'abolisheth Killing also; and together with Lust,  
'took away Adultery. He also casts out of men's  
'Lives accursed Perjuries, which by the Prohibi-  
'tion of an Oath, he has put in his Site as it were to  
'Security: For it cannot be, that any should not  
'keep an Oath when there is no Oath; There-  
'fore saith he, **You have heard, that it was said**  
'**of old time, Thou shalt not Perjure;** but **now**  
'**render to the Lord thy Oaths;** but **I say unto you,**  
'**SWEAR NOT AT ALL,** neither by Heaven,  
'**or by Earth,** but let your **YEA be YEA,** and your **NAY**  
'**NAY;** for whatsoever is more, is of the Devil.

Thus.



Thus do they mostly end, which shows how they understood Christ's Words.

Greg. Nazianz. in his Dialogue against Swearing,  
Jamb. 20.

XLVII. Gregory Nazianzen, a great Man in the Church, also speaketh to the same Purpose, in his Dialogue against Swearing, saying, 'B. *What Oath dost thou leave to us?* A. I wish I might leave none, and that there were never any more. But thou sayest, We have heard that God himself sometimes swore: The holy Scriptures record that, But is there any thing better then God? Surely nothing is found better then He: If therefore nothing be better then he, it should follow, that he never swears. B. *Why therefore do they record that he swore?* A. When God saith any thing, that is the Oath of God. B. *And how doth he swear by himself?* A. How! He should not at all be God, if he should lye. B. *Thou speakest strangely!* A. No Wonder, that is the Nature of God peculiarly, that he cannot lye: There is none that can deny this. B. *But what wilt thou say to me of the old Covenant? Surely it doth not prohibit an Oath, but requires a true one?* A. No Wonder: At that time only it was prescribed in the Law concerning Murder; but now it is not lawful for any Cause so much as to smite or beat: then the End of an Evil Deed only came into Judgment; but now that also which moveth to the End.

This

God swears  
not.

' This is my Judgment: *See how we have*  
 ' a long Progress, wherefore a Wise Man will  
 ' abstain from Oaths. B. *What then? Dost thou*  
 ' give to some as Infants a kind of first Food, that  
 ' they may at length receive a succeeding kind of Meat?  
 ' A. Thou judgest right and wisely. B. *But* Paul did not  
 ' Paul also swore, as they say? A. Who said so? *Swear.*  
 ' Oh, what a vain Jangler was he that said it!  
 ' Quoth he, *God is my Witness, and God knoweth*;  
 ' Those words are not an Oath, but a certain As-  
 ' severation in such great things, constant and  
 ' inviolable. B. *Wilt thou allow the same also to*  
 ' me? A. I wish, that to thy Power thou wouldst  
 ' plainly become a Paul, and so thou wouldst have  
 ' a Right Rule of thine Actions. B. *What if*  
 ' I use an Oath Unwillingly, but to free me from Dan- See Tertullia-  
 ' ger? A. Let another allow thee that. B. *as before, to*  
 ' What if an Oath be written, and not pronounced with whom this a-  
 ' the Voice? A. And what's the Meaning of a grees.  
 ' Writing? Surely amongst all other Obligations,  
 ' a Writing doth more bind and oblige us. B.  
 ' What if we be drawn by Necessity to give an Oath? Mark how  
 ' A. Why didst thou not rather Dye? For sure- Gregor. Naz.:  
 ' ly, thou shouldst rather Dye then do that- *speaks of the*  
 ' B. What if the Books of the holy Scriptures be not Scripture, in  
 ' used? A. What! Is Religion placed in a Comparison  
 ' Leaf? Is God absent by this Means? It is evi- of God's O-  
 ' dent that thou fearest (Paper, or) Parchment, mnipresence  
 ' and fear God more: This is a frequent Dis- with the mind  
 ' ease to many, and usual; neither is it other, and the sense,  
 ' wise then if a Man beat the Master, and Dis- and regard  
 ' grace have of it.

' grace him, and make his Servant a Free man, and  
 ' do him Honour (*What a notable Reproach should that  
 ' be*) ' or as if a Man should preserve the King's  
 ' Image, and in the mean time destroy the King.  
 ' B. *It is even as thou sayest: But I would have thee say  
 ' what is more to be shewn.* A. Many use to say, I  
 ' swore with my Tongue, but my Mind is free from  
 ' Swearing. Any thing may be more cunning-  
 ' ly excused then an Oath: Let him not suffer  
 ' any Colour to be made for himself; For this is  
 ' an Oath: And how much Mischief, tell me,  
 ' comes from Deceit itself? Let us see what an  
 ' Oath is: Nothing else but the very Meaning  
 ' (*or Mind*) of those things which we set down—  
 ' Thou wouldst have me add what remains: Surely  
 ' an Oath is nothing else, but a certain Consum-  
 ' mation as it were of Mischiefs: O Dangerous  
 ' Flame! B. *But Plato doth some such thing:  
 ' He is Religiously aware, that he swear not by any God.*  
 ' A. Truly I know what thou art about to say:  
 ' There was a certain Plane Tree, by which alone  
 ' he made Oath: But he did not swear rightly,  
 ' neither by that; For he had an Understanding in  
 ' something; but what a just & religious Oath  
 ' should be, that he could not understand. And  
 ' what was this, tell me now? A certain Shadow of  
 ' an Oath; a Declaration without a Name; an Oath no-  
 ' Oath, as the Philosophers swore by a strange and  
 ' unknown God. Lastly, it is nothing else, but  
 ' to make Oath by any thing. Here our Speech let  
 ' be an End. Thou threatnest that thou wilt leave  
 ' me

Greg. Naz.  
 his Account  
 of an Oath.

use athirst sooner then I would. A. If an Oath seem a small thing to thee, truly I cannot commend thee. But if it is, as it is, in the number of horrible things, I will also dare to produce a mighty thing: I do adjure by a very Oath it self, that thou abstain from, and beware of Oaths, and thou hast the Victory. B. I wish I had. What Fruit gets he that often sweareth? Laughter. What more? That when he speaks Truth, he shall not be believed.

In another place he saith, 'That to swear by *Greg. Naz.* Creatures is to swear with regard to God him- *on Cant.* self, so Christ himself saith, *Mat. 5. 35.* and *Hos. 18.* chap. 13. 16, 23.

*Casarius, Num. 43.*

**XLVIII.** *Casarius*, Brother to *Gregory Nazianzen*, in his Spiritual Sentences, hath this Sentence, 'Flee ALL Swearing, or EVERY Oath: How then shall we get Belief? As well by Speech as by virtuous Actions and Carriages, that gain Belief to our Speech. Perjury is a Denying of God: What need of God in this Matter? Interpose and put in use thy Actions.'

*Epiphani. adv. Hæres. lib. 1. ord. 19. §. 6.*

**XLIX.** \* *Epiphanius*, whom *Scrates Scholasticus*, lib. 6. cap. 9. calls a Man of great Fame and Renown, and a Virtuous and Godly Person, in his first Book against Heresies (not accounting Denying to Swear an Heresie; but rather the

contrary, as may appear by his words, which are these) 'In the Law, as well as the Gospel, it is commanded not to use another Name in Swearing: but in the Gospel he commanded not to Swear, neither by Heaven nor Earth, nor other Oath; but let Yea Yea; Nay, Nay, BE AS AN OATH as Petavius translates it) 'for what is more then this is of Evil. Therefore I suppose that the Lord ordained concerning this, because of some mens Allegations, that would swear by other Names; and first, that we must not Swear, no, not by the Lord himself, nor by any other Oath; for it is an Evil thing to swear at all. Therefore he is Evil that compels not only to swear by God, but by other things, &c.

*Ambros. de Virgin. lib. 3.*

L. Ambrose, soon after, being a Lay man or Citizen of Milan, was by the People, against his Will, chosen Bishop of that City, for his great Worth and Godliness, whose Writings are of great Account; And speaking of the Inconveniency occasion'd by an Oath, saith, 'Wherefore not without Cause doth the Lord in the Gospel command not to Swear, that there may be no Cause of Forswearing, that there may be no Necessity of Offending.

Exhortat. ad Virgin. 'He that Swareth not, certainly he never Forsweareth; but he that Swareth, sometimes he must needs fall into Perjury, because all Men are subject to Lye. Do not there-

therefore Swear, lest thou beginnest to For-  
swear.

Therefore the Lord, who came to teach the little Ones, to INSPIRE Novices, to con- firm the Perfect, faith in the Gospel, YE MUST NOT SWEAR AT ALL; because he spoak to the Weak.

Ambrose on Mat. 5. He was for Inspiration & Perfection.

Lastly, He spoak not only to the Apostles, but to the Multitude; for he would not have thee to Swear, lest thou shouldst Forswear.

And he added, Not to swear, neither by Heaven, nor by the Earth, &c. namely, by those things that are not subject to thy Power.

The Lord Swore, and shall not Repent. He may swear, who cannot repent of his Oath: And what did the Lord swear? That Christ is a Priest forever: Is that Uncertain? Is that Impossible? the Lord has sworn. Can it any way be changed?

Psalm 109.

Do not therefore use the Example of an Oath, because thou hast not Power to fulfil an Oath.

Also, in his Commentary on the Hebrews, he saith, Because Mankind is incredulous, God condescendeth to us, if even he sweareth for us.

Ambr. Com. on Heb. c. 6.

So that he shews, that not to be an Argument for Swearing to be desired, seeing it is only in Condescension to a Defect; not to be encouraged from it to swear, or to require it.

Oaths founded on Defect, not to be encouraged; then not to be imposed.

Chrysos.

Chrysost. on Gen. hom. 15.

L. I. Chrysostom, in those dayes very Famous  
in the Church, and therefore styl'd the *Golden*  
*Doctor*; in his 15th Homily on *Gen. 22*, saith;  
"A Christian must flee Oaths by all means, hear-  
ing the Sentence of Christ, which saith, *It was*  
*said to them of old, Thou shalt not Forswear; But I*  
*say unto you, SWEAR NOT AT ALL.*  
"Let none say therefore, I swear in a Just Busi-  
ness. IT IS NOT LAWFUL TO SWEAR,  
NEITHER IN A JUST NOR UNJUST  
THING.

Id. Hom. 15.

3.

"To swear is of the Devil, seeing Christ  
saith, *For what is more, is of Evil, or the Evil*  
*One.*

Ad pop. An.

sioc. Hom.

19.

The Reason

of Oaths.

"Swearing took not its Beginning from the  
Will, but from Negligence only. Thou hast  
heard (saith he) the Wisdom of Christ, say-  
ing, *That not only to Forswear, but also in ANY*  
*MANNER TO SWEAR, is Devilish, and all a*  
*Devise of the Evil One.*

Against the

Dispraise of

solitary Life

L. 1.

Of Com.

punction of

Heart, l. 1.

Against the

Jews, Hom.

34.

"IF TO SWEAR IS FOUND TO BE DE-  
VILISH, how are they to be punished who *Forswear*?

"IF TO SWEAR TRULY BE A CRIME,  
and a transgressing of the Commandment, where  
shall we place *Perjury*?

Speaking of a *Christian* (so call'd; for he  
that dare do such things we cannot call a sincere  
*Christian*) whom he law compelling a certain  
Honest,



(27)  
 Honest, Ingenious, Modest and Faithful Matron,  
 to go into the *Jews Synagogue*, there to be Sworn  
 about some Business in Controversie betwixt them, she desiring Help, and imploring to be  
 freed from this Wicked Force, &c. 'I (saith he) Agreeing  
with Eusebi-  
us before:  
 'kindled with Zeal, arose, and not suffering her to The Godly  
 'be further drawn into this Prevarication, re- Zeal of Chry-  
 'cused her, and enquired of him that had drawn sostom Com-  
 'her to it, Whether he were a *Christian* or mendable.  
 'not? *Who confessing he was*, I severely urged  
 'and upbraided him with his Folly and Extream  
 'Madness, to go about to draw any Body, be-  
 'professing himself to be a *Worshipper of Christ*, TO  
 'THE JEWS DENS, who had crucified him.  
 'And going on in speaking, I taught him out  
 'of the holy Gospel, THAT IT IS NOT Much less to  
 'LAWFUL TO SWEAR AT ALL, NOR TO force others.  
 'INCITE ANY TO SWEAR, after that, not Chrys. calls  
 'one that is a Believer or initiated, no, nor one that is Swearing &  
 'not initiated, to be drawn to that Extremity: After Compelling  
 'I had spoken much, and a long time of it, I to Swear at  
 'delivered his Mind from the Error of Opinion, all an Error;  
 'then we are  
 ' &c. Orbedax  
ad or modan

Be pleased to observe how *Chrysostom*, a Zealous and See his great  
 Famous Man, both for his Books, and the Perse-Praise in Sec-  
 cution: that he suffered, being Patriarch or Prime O- Schol. l. 6. c. 3.  
 versee of the Church at *Constantinople*, one of the Four He was of  
 of the chiefest in the World, uses no Distinction of pri- the Race of  
 vate and publick Oaths, the common Talk of our Im- Senators.  
 posers; for here he labours against drawing any to Swear Remember  
 at all, even in Judicature, because it was not lawful TO *Ter tullian's*  
 SWEAR Case by this.

**SWEAR SO AT ALL,** no, not as the Jews swore, much less as the Gentiles.

Homil: 28.

Ecclog. de juram.

Again, 'Let none say to me, *What if any lay on me a Necessity of Swearing? And what if he do not believe?*

Hom. 5. 6d

pop. Antioch.

'Certainly where the Law is violated one must not make any mention of *Necessity*; for there is one unavoidable *Necessity*, **NOT TO OFFEND GOD**. Moreover, this I say, That 'in the mean time we may cut off superfluous *Oaths*, those, I mean, which are made rashly 'and without any *Necessity* amongst Friends and 'Servants; And if thou take away these, in 'the other thou shalt need me no more: For 'that Mouth which hath learned to fear and flee 'an Oath, if any would compel it ten thousand 'times, it will never admit of falling into that 'Custom, &c.

Chrysoft. 3.

gainst giving

an Oath.

Chrysoft. ex-

horto to be

Right Qua-

kers by Trem-

bling, & not

Swearing

the R.

red.

red.

red.

But if thou fear nothing else, at least fear 'that Book which thou takest in thy hands, bid- 'ding another to Swear; and when thou turnst it, 'and markst what *Christ* hath there commanded 'concerning *Oaths*, \***QUAKE & FORBEAR.** 'What doth it say then of *OATHS* there?

*Answ.* But I say unto you, 'Swear not at all. 'Dost thou make that *Law* an Oath, which forbids 'to Swear? Oh Injurious, Oh Unjust thing! For 'thou dost as, if a man should take for his Compa- 'nion a *Lawgiver* that forbids to kill, and command 'him to be made a Murderer. As therefore, when a 'Fight is begun, although we are often Reviled;

yet

" yet we endure it well, and we say to him that  
 " doth it, that Patron of thine hath hurt me, he  
 " holds my Hands; and this serves us for Solace.  
 " After the same manner if thou wilt exact an  
 " Oath of any, restrain thy self, and with-hold;  
 " and say to him that is about to swear, *What shall* Against  
 " I do to thee, *fish God hath commanded, neither to* Compelling  
 " swear, nor to compel to swear; he now with-holdeth me: to Swear, &  
 " This is enough for the Law-giver's Honour, shows how  
 " for thy Security, and his Fear who should swear. to avoid it.

" Do thus much for me therefore, that they He differs  
 " that come hither may say, *That is not to be seen* much from  
 " in any City, *which is at Antioch; For they that inha-* those that  
 " bit that City had rather their Tongues should be cut out, punish us  
 " then an Oath should proceed out of their Mouth, &c. for not  
 " swearing.

" What is it? Thou shalt render unto the Lord  
 " thy Oaths: that is, in swearing thou shalt speak On Mar.  
 " true; But I say unto you, **NOT TO SWEAR** Homil. 17.1  
 " **AT ALL:** And then, to put off the Hearers,  
 " that they should not swear by God, he saith,  
 " Neither by Heaven, for it is the Throne of God;  
 " nor by the Earth, for it is his Foot-stool, &c. For he  
 " said not, because the Heaven is Fair and Great,  
 " nor because the Earth is Vile; but because  
 " that is the Throne of God, and this his Foot-stool;  
 " by all which he drives them to the Fear of God.

" — What then, if any require an Oath, and im-  
 " pose a Necessity of Swearing?

Object.

" A. Let the Fear of the Lord be more for-  
 " cible to thee than all Necessity or Compulsion:  
 " For if thou wilt alwayes object such like Oc-

'cassions, thou wilt keep none of those things which are commanded: For thou mightst also say it concerning thy Wife; *What if she be a Scold? What if she be Nice and Curious?* And of thy Right Eye; *What if I have a Delight in it, and be inflamed with the Love of it, &c?* and so thou wilt trample upon all things that are commanded. But in the Laws which Men command thou dar'st alledge no such thing, as, *What if this or that, &c?* And if thou wilt keep the Law of Christ, thou wilt not suffer any Compulsion to hinder thee from the Observation thereof; for he that heard the Blessedness that is before, in the same Sermon, and shews himself such an one as Christ commenderth, he shall suffer no such Compulsion from any, seeing he is Venerable and Admirable with all Men.

Constancy  
in not Swea-  
ring getteth  
Veneration.

Object.

*What then shall we say is beyond Yea and Nay?*

*A.* Without doubt **AN OATH**, not Perjury; sith this is altogether manifest, and needs be taught that it is of Evil; and not so much Superfluous, as Altogether Contrary. Now, that is superfluous which is added needlessly, and too much; which surely is an Oath.

Great Reason.

Object.

*Why then shall this be said to be of Evil? And if it was of Evil, how was it commanded in the Law?*

*A.* Thou wilt say that also concerning thy Wife; How is it now **Adultery**, which was sometime suffered? What then shall we say to these things? But that many of those things which were then spoken, the Weakness of them that

' that received the Law required: For it is a  
 ' thing very unmeet for God to be worshipped  
 ' with the Smell of Sacrifices, even as it is not  
 ' congruent for a *Philosopher* to stutter and bable;  
 ' Therefore such a Divorce is now called Adultery;  
 ' and an Oath *now* comes of Evil, *when the*  
 ' *Increasing of Virtues are come to their Perfection.*  
 ' But if these things had been the Laws of the  
 ' Devil from the beginning, they had never come  
 ' to such Proficiency; for unless those things had  
 ' gone before, those other had never been so easily  
 ' received. Do not therefore desire the Virtue  
 ' of those things, whose Use is now past: They  
 ' were available indeed then when the time required,  
 ' yea, if thou pleasest, now also: For  
 ' now their Virtue is shewn in that same thing  
 ' also, wherein we most accuse; for that they  
 ' now appear such, is their great Praise: For,  
 ' unless they had nurs'd us up well and profitably,  
 ' and had made us fit for the receiving of greater  
 ' things, they would not now seem to us to be  
 ' such. For as the Nurse's Teat, when it hath done all its  
 ' Office, and brought the Child to the measure of the  
 ' stronger Age, seems to be unprofitable; and the Parents,  
 ' who formerly judged the Teat to be Necessary for  
 ' their Child, do afterwards pursue it with very many  
 ' Scorns, and usually do not only make it Uncomely in  
 ' Words, but also besmear it with certain bitter Juices  
 ' of Herbs, that when they cannot bridle the eager  
 ' seasonable Desire of the Child about it, they may  
 ' quench it at least with those things. So also Christ  
 ' said, It was of Evil; not that he might shew the

This is True  
 Christian  
 Doctrine.

With Christians it  
 ought to be  
 so. What  
 Evil is it  
 then to hale  
 men back  
 again upon  
 Penalties?

'old Law to be of the Devil, but that also he might re-  
 'call them more vehemently from the old Vileness:  
 'And these things he said unto his Disciples; but  
 'unto the stupid Jews, and them that persist in  
 'the same Impiety, as with a certain Bitterness,  
 'he so compassed their City, they being captiva-  
 'ted with Fear, as that he made it inaccessible:  
 'And because he could not hereby restrain them,  
 'but that they again desir'd to see it, as Children  
 'running back to the Teat, he took it quite away,  
 'destroying it, and scattering them, most of them,  
 'far away from it; as men usually shut up Calves  
 'from their Dams, that they may gain them to  
 'be weaned from their accustomed Food of Milk.

\* A great  
 Enemy to  
 Images.

† The Reason  
 why God ad-  
 mitted Oaths.  
 No Ordinance  
 of God or man  
 originally, but

Corruption  
 insensibly bro-  
 ught it, & God  
 only suffer'd it  
 by a true Deity  
 till the Times  
 of Reformation

'But if the old Testament were of the Devil,  
 'he would not have forbidden \* Images to be  
 'worshipped; and to the contrary, have brought  
 'in and commanded such a Worship as this; for  
 'the Devil would have such a thing to be done.  
 'But now we see that the Law did on the contra-  
 'ry; and for that Cause also the Way of Swea-  
 'ring was in times permitted, † lest men should  
 'Worship Images, and Swear by them, Swear,  
 'saith he, by the true God. So the Law brought  
 'not a mean Good to men, but a very great  
 'one, if it sought to bring them to solid Mear.

Object.

'What Evil therefore hath Swearing?

His Reason  
 our Reason.

'Much Evil; without question; But now at  
 'this time, after SO GREAT MANIFESTA-  
 'TIONS of Power; not then by any means.

Object.

'Thou wilt say, How can it be, that the same  
 'is sometimes Good, sometimes not.

'I

'I will also produce too against thee, How is it  
 'that the same thing is sometimes good, some-  
 'times not good? Doth not all that is in the  
 'World proclaim the same, as, Educations,  
 'Arts, Fruits and all other things?

'Therefore first weigh that in our own Na-  
 'ture: For to be carried in one's Arms, is a  
 'good Part in the first Age, *afterwards a very pit-  
 'tiful thing.* To use Chew'd Meats in the begin-  
 'ning of one's Life is good, *afterwards very full of  
 'Indecency and Loathsomeness:* To be fed with Milk  
 '& to flee to the Nourishment of the Teats, at the  
 'first is profitable and wholesome, *but afterwards  
 'hurtful & noisom.* Thou seest how the same things  
 'are sometimes good, according to the times, and  
 'sometimes appear to be of another Nature: For  
 'it is a comely thing for a Child to wear a Child's  
 'Vesture, *but shameful for a Man.* Wouldst thou  
 'also learn on the contrary, how those things  
 'are not fit for a Child, which are not for a Man?  
 'Give a Man's Vesture to a Child, and great Laugh-  
 'ter will follow thereupon, and greater Danger in Go-  
 'ing, making him to reel this way and that way: Com-  
 'mit unto him the Care of Civil Businessses and Affairs;  
 'either to Traffique, or Sow or Reap, and again it will  
 'be very ridiculous. But what do I speak of  
 'these? Even Man-slaughter it self, which Christ  
 'calls evidently *a Work of the Devil,* sometime  
 'in due season done, hath been praised; as Phi-  
 'neas killed a Man; and it was reput'd to him for  
 'Righteousness; Abraham also was not only a Ho-  
 'micide;



*murder*, but a *Parricide*; and *Peter* slew two, but  
 'it was a *Spiritual Work*: So we must not only  
 'consider the *Actions*, but the *Time*, *Cause*,  
 'Will and *Difference of Persons*, and all other  
 'Circumstances.

\* Much re-  
 garded and  
 observed by  
 venerable

Antiquity,

said *Jam.*

and the Fa-

thers, part

2. page 36.

*Act. Mon.*

v. 1. p. 701.

A Great

Truth; For

swearing

ends in No

Swearing.

Again, in his *Imperfect \* Work*, cap. 5.

'It hath been said, *Thou shalt not Forswear*; but  
 'shalt perform to the Lord thy Oaths: But I say unto  
 'you, **SWEAR NOT AT ALL, &c.**] Behold  
 'the fourth Command, which Covetous Men  
 'account the least, because they do not account it  
 'a Sin to Swear, without which the Command  
 'of the Law cannot stand? For unless Swearing  
 'it self be forbidden, False Oaths cannot be ta-  
 'ken away, because out of Swearing springs up For-  
 'swearing; for, whosoever swears often, at one  
 'time or other swears falsely; for this Reason So-  
 'lomon gives that Admonition, *Accustom not thy*  
 'Mouth to Swearing; for there is much Danger therein.  
 'For, as he that accustoms himself to talk much,  
 'must needs at one time or other utter Unseason-  
 'able Words; and he that useth frequently to  
 'strike with his Hand, cannot but sometimes  
 'strike Unjustly; so he that accustoms himself  
 'to Swear in things Convenient, oft-times For-  
 'swears himself, even against his Will (*Custom*  
 '*prevailing in him*) in things superfluous; for we  
 'can accustom our selves to any thing when we  
 'will, but we cannot turn off that Custom when  
 'we will. And what the Judgment of God  
 'is against them that swear, *Solomon* teacheth;

'A

'A man, saith he, that Swears much, a Wound shall  
 'not depart from his House. If then a Wound depart  
 'not from them that swear, how shall it at length  
 'depart from them that forswear. Tell me, my  
 'Friend, What dost thou get by Swearing? For  
 'if thy Adversary did believe that thou wouldst  
 'Swear well, he would never force thee to swear  
 'at all; but because he thinks thou wilt swear  
 'falsly, therefore it is that he compels thee to  
 'swear; and when thou hast sworn, he doth not  
 'sit down as satisfied in the Truth of thine Oath,  
 'but goes away full of Revenge, as it were in  
 'Condemnation of thy Perjury.

Excellently  
 distinguished,  
 and the Sor-  
 didness of  
 Oaths fully  
 represented.

'An Oath never has a good End; for, some  
 'will judge thou hast sworn for Covetousness;  
 'and some too, that thou hast Forsworn: But  
 'they that are willing to suppose well of thee,  
 'although they do not believe thou hast sworn  
 'FALSLY, yet they are not able to affirm thou  
 'hast sworn IN TRUTH: But no man can main-  
 'tain thou hast done RELIGIOUSLY. By Swear-  
 'ing therefore thou comest into Reproach with  
 'thy Enemies, and into Suspicion with thy  
 'Friends. But thou wilt say perhaps,  
 'What shall I do; he neither doth nor will believe  
 'me, unless I Swear?

According  
 to Enslavement.  
 The Unhap-  
 piness of  
 Swearing,  
 especially a-  
 gainst Con-  
 science. His  
 Advice a-  
 bout the  
 Matter,  
 when drove  
 to a Pinch,  
 Object.

'Be content rather to lose thy Money than  
 'thy Salvation; set more by thy Soul, than  
 'by thy Estate: If thou shouldst lose any part of  
 'thy Estate, thou may'st live notwithstanding;  
 'but if thou losest God, whereon wilt thou live?  
 'Dost

His Cauti-  
on to those  
that impose  
Oaths, and  
Reflection  
upon the  
Practice.

Lying as  
bad as Swea-  
ring in his  
Esteem.

“Dost thou not know, that what thou partest  
“Self-denyingly with for the Fear of God, thou  
“receivest a greater Reward for it, then if thou  
“hadst given Alms; because, the more we bear  
“the Cross, the more worthily are we crowned for  
“it: Behold, my Friend, I advise thee not to Force any  
“man to swear; if thou thinkest he will swear well,  
“avoid it; or if thou thinkest he will swear amiss,  
“avoid it so much the rather: For although he  
“swear well, yet thou, as far as relates to thy  
“Conscience, art become the Cause of his Per-  
“jury, because thou compellest him to take an Oath  
“with this Intention, not barely that he should Swear,  
“but that he should Forswear; for if thou hadst thought  
“he would have sworn honestly, thou wouldst not have  
“forced him to swear at all. Oh foolish man, that com-  
“pellest another to Swear! Thou knowest not what  
“thou doest: He, although he forswear himself,  
“yet does it with Advantage; but thou, without  
“any Advantage, art found a Partaker of his Perjury.  
“He that does not stick at Lying, does not fear  
“Swearing; for he that tells a Lye, goes beyond  
“the Truth in his Heart; and he that swears falsely,  
“passes over God in his Words: What then is the  
“Difference between passing over God, and go-  
“ing beyond the Truth, seeing God is Truth itself?  
“This is the only Difference, That when we Lye,  
“we pass over the Truth in our Heart; but when we  
“Forswear, we pass over God in Words; For, to men  
“we give Satisfaction by WORDS; to God, by  
“CONSCIENCE. God himself, who forbid  
“For-

' Forswearing, even he *afterward* commanded NOT  
 ' TO SWEAR: He therefore that is not afraid to  
 ' set light by the Commands of God in Swear-  
 ' ing, will not be afraid to do the like in For-  
 ' swearing. But what wouldst thou have? Doth  
 ' he fear God, or doth he not fear him? If he be  
 ' one that fears God, he will not Lye, though  
 ' he be not sworn; but if he be one that does not  
 ' fear God, he cannot speak Truth, though he  
 ' be sworn. Hear, ye CLERGY-MEN, who  
 ' bring the HOLY GOSPELS for men to swear  
 ' upon; How can ye be secure from that Oath, who  
 ' saw the Seed of Perjury? He that brings the Fire by  
 ' which an House is burnt, is he a Stranger to the Burn-  
 ' ing? or who reaches a Sword, whereby a man is slain,  
 ' is not he an Accessory to the Slaughter? So he that  
 ' gives the Opportunity of Forswearing, is a Partaker of  
 ' the Perjury: If it were well done to swear, ye said  
 ' rightly, that we gave them the Gospel to Swear, not to  
 ' Forswear: But now ye know, THAT IT IS A SIN  
 ' EVEN TO SWEAR WELL, how can ye be ac-  
 ' quitted that give the Occasion of Sinning against  
 ' God? Let the Fire cease, and there is no Burning;  
 ' take away the Sword, and the man is not slain; SO  
 ' TAKE AWAY SWEARING, AND THERE  
 ' IS NO FORSWEARING. Be these things  
 ' spoken of them that swear by God: But as  
 ' for them that swear by the Elements, their Ini-  
 ' quity is more detestable; for Heaven and Earth,  
 ' and the rest of the Elements God made for his  
 ' own Service; not for men to swear by: For,

Admirably  
 well argued.

His Rebuke  
 to the Clergy  
 for tending  
 the Gospels  
 (or Bible) to  
 swear on.

' behold, in the Law it is commanded, that they  
 ' should swear by none but God: He therefore  
 ' that swears by Heaven, or by the Earth, or  
 ' whatsoever it is he swears by, makes a God of  
 ' it; Therefore every one commits Idolatry, who  
 ' swears by any thing *besides* God, if it were at all  
 ' lawful to swear, because he does not perform his  
 ' Oaths to the Lord his God, but to the Ele-  
 ' ments: And so he commits a double Sin; *first*,  
 ' in that he swears; and *adly*, in making a God  
 ' of that by which he swears, &c.

Again, in Chap. 23. Homil. 43. on these  
 words, *Wo unto you Blind Guides, who say, Who so-  
 ever shall swear by the Temple, it is nothing; but who-  
 soever shall swear by the Gold of the Temple, he is a  
 Debter* — ' Many Christians (saith he) now  
 ' adayes do so unwisely understand many  
 ' things; for lo, if there shall be any Cause,  
 ' he seems to do a small matter, who swears by  
 ' God; but he that swears by the Gospel seems to  
 ' have done some greater thing: To whom it may  
 ' be said, *Fools! The holy Scriptures are for God, not  
 ' God for the Scriptures; for God is GREATER  
 ' which sanctifieth the Gospel, then the Gospel which is  
 ' sanctified of God.*

Again, Hom 9. on *Acts of the Apostles*, ch. 3.

' To this conduces not a little, *not to Swear*,  
 ' and *not to be Angry*; for, in not being Angry,  
 ' we shall not have an Enemy; and cast off a mans  
 ' Oath, and withal thou shalt cast off those things  
 ' that concern Wrath, and shalt extinguish all  
 ' Anger.

'Anger: For Wrath and an Oath are like the  
 'Wind. We set forth sail, but there is no bene-  
 'fit of the Sail if there be no Wind: so if we  
 'do not cry out, nor swear, we cut the Sinews of  
 'Wrath. Come, tell me for what Cause an  
 'Oath was introduced, and why it was allowed?  
 'Let us tell its *Original*, and whence it sprung Again, the O-  
 'up again, and how, and by whom; and by your *original* of an  
 'Declaration we shall gratifie your Attention: Oath. He  
 'For, he that doth justly, must necessarily be al- concurs with  
 'so studious of Wisdom; and he that is not yet us.  
 'such, is not worthy to hear a Discourse: For,  
 'Abraham made Covenants, and sacrificed Sacri-  
 'fices, and offered Offerings; and as yet there  
 'was not an Oath: Whence then came in an Oath:  
 'When Evils increased, when all things became topsi-  
 'turvy, when they inclined to Idolatry; then verily  
 'when they appear'd unfaithful, they called God to wit-  
 'ness, as giving a Surety for Security for their Words;  
 'for an Oath is a Suretyship, where their Behaviours have The Defect  
 'no Trust or Credit: Whereupon, first he that tion of an  
 'swears is taxed, If he have no Credit without an Oath.  
 'Oath, and the greatest Surety: And because  
 'men so little trust one another, they seek God for  
 'a Surety, not Man. Secondly, He is in the same  
 'Crime who receives an Oath, if he draw God  
 'to be a Surety for Contracts; and say, THAT  
 'HE WILL NOT TRUST EXCEPT HE  
 'HAVE HIM. Oh monstrous thing! Oh shame-  
 'ful Disgrace! Thou a Worm, Dust and Ashes, and  
 'a Vapour; darest thou snatch thy Lord, who art such

A severe Declaration against Compelling People to swear.

*'an one for a Surety, and compellest to accept him? Tell me, if a Fellow-Servant should say to your Children, striving among themselves, and not trusting one another, Unless the common Master become a Surety, there is no trusting; would not many Stripes be inflicted, that he might learn, that he should make use of him as a Lord in other things, not in these? What do I speak of a Fellow-Servant? For, if one would have a more Venerable Man, would not the Case have Disgrace in it? But I shall (saith he) therefore neither compel him, because this is also amongst men. He may say thus, Sometimes thou may'st not receive a Surety to thine. What then? And I shall lose (saith he) what is given. I would not say this; but do not thou endure that God be reproached. Therefore he which Compels hath a MORE Unavoidable Punishment then he which Swears. Likewise he also which swears when none requires; this also is harder, that one swears for a Half-Penny, for a little Commodity, for Unrighteousness. And these things are so dangerous, when there are no Perjuries; but if Perjuries are committed, then all things are confounded, and both he that swears, and he that receives an Oath, are the Cause.*

Again, of the Danger of Compelling People to swear.

Object.

*'But there are some things that are not known, say they.  
'But fore-seeing these things, thou must do nothing rashly, but if thou shalt do any thing  
ne-*



negligently, take the Penalty of the Inconvenience in thy own Hand; better so to suffer Loss than otherwise. For, tell me, Thou halest a man to an Oath; What dost thou seek? Wouldst thou have him to Forswear? But this is extreme Folly; for the Loss will turn upon thy own Head: It were better to lose thy Means, then that he should be lost; wherefore thou dost this to thy own Dammage, and to God's Dishonour, such is the Soul of a Beast and of a Wicked Man!

*But I expect that he may not Forswear.*

Object.

Therefore believe him Without an Oath also.

*But there are many, say they, who without an Oath dare Defraud, who with an Oath do not do it.*

Object.

Thou deceivest thy self, O Man! A Man who hath learn'd to Steal and to Wrong a man, will also trample upon an Oath often: But if he hath a Reverence in Swearing, much more in doing Unjustly.

*But thou wilt say, He suffers this unwillingly.*

Object.

Therefore he is worthy of Excuse. But what shall I say of Oaths of the Courts that are left? for there thou canst say no such thing; for there for Six Pence both Oaths and Perjuries are made: For, because a Thunder-Bolt doth not come down from above, and all things are not overturned, thou standest, and WILT \* BIND GOD: Why? That thou mayst get Herbs and Shoes for a small Price, thou callest him to witness. Do we

\* An Oath is a Binding of God for our Security.

there-

A Pathetical  
Censure of  
Oaths, and  
them that  
use them e-  
ven in Courts

‘therefore think we do not sin, because they are  
‘not punished? This is the Lord’s Mercy, not  
‘our Desert. Swear by thy own Child, swear  
‘by thy self; say, *So let the Officer keep from my*  
‘*Sides:* But thou art afraid of thy Sides; IS  
‘GOD MORE VILE, more Contemptible  
‘then thy Head? \* Say, *So may I not be blind?*  
‘But Christ so spareth us, that he *FORBIDS US*  
‘*TO SWEAR EVEN BY OUR OWN HEAD.*  
‘But we do so despise the Glory of God, *that*  
‘*he is drawn every where:* Ye know not what  
‘God is, and with what a Mouth he ought to be  
‘invoked. Moreover, when we speak of any  
‘Virtuous Man, we say, *Wash thy Mouth, that so*  
‘*thou mayst be heedful.* But now we vainly dis-  
‘tract that Honourable Name, *which is a Name*  
‘*above every Name, which is Wonderful in all the*  
‘*Earth, which the Devils hearing do tremble at:*  
‘OH MOST CONTEMPTIBLE CUS-  
‘TOM WHICH HATH DONE THAT!  
‘Lastly, If thou shalt impose on any a Necessi-  
‘ty of Swearing in the holy House, how horri-  
‘ble an Oath dost thou enjoin, if thou dost  
‘so? Is it that we abuse that simply, *this not so?*  
‘Ought not one even to Dread when God is na-  
‘med? But even among the *Jews* this Name  
‘was so Reverend, *that it was written on the Plate*  
‘*of the Mitre, and none might bear those Letters of the*  
‘*Name of God, but only the High Priest:* And now  
‘also we so bear his Name tenderly. If it was  
‘not lawful for all to Name God simply, how  
‘great

With what  
Tenderness  
God’s Name  
should be  
used.

' great Audaciousness is it to call it in Witness?  
 ' Tell me now, how great Madness is it? Behold, I Chrysoſtom's  
 ' ſay, and † reſiſte to you, amend thoſe Court Oaths, Boldneſs.  
 ' and ſhew me all thoſe that do not obey: Behold, He teſtifies  
 ' even in your Preſence I will command them that are our Mind.  
 ' ſet apart for the Miniſtry, the Houſe of Prayer, and  
 ' admoniſh and ſhew, **THAT IT IS NOT LAW-**  
 ' **FUL FOR ANY TO SWEAR,** nor otherwiſe nei-  
 ' ther. Let him therefore be brought to me,  
 ' whoſoever he be, becauſe theſe things alſo  
 ' ought to be done before us, becauſe ye are  
 ' Children. † Oh Shame! for, it is Confuſion † Mark the  
 ' that ye have need to be inſtructed in ſome great Zeal  
 ' things. Dareſt not thou that art initiated of Chryſoſt.  
 ' touch the holy Table? But that is yet worſe, in this place.  
 ' thou which art initiated, dareſt thou touch the  
 ' holy Table, and that which it is not lawful  
 ' for all the Prieſts to touch, **AND SO SWEAR?**  
 ' but being gone out, thou wouldeſt not touch the  
 ' Head of thy Child; but toucheſt thou the Ta-  
 ' ble, and doeſt not dread nor fear? Bring ſuch  
 ' to me, I will inſlict a juſt Punishment; and  
 ' with Joy will ſend both away with this Com-  
 ' mandment, Do as you liſt, I \* Impoſe this Law, \* Men never  
 ' **NOT TO SWEAR AT ALL:** What Hope is could plead  
 ' there of Salvation, when you ſo contemn and deſpiſe Conſcience  
 ' all things? Haſt thou therefore received Let- for not be-  
 ' ters and Badges that thou ſhouldeſt loſe thy Soul: ing believed  
 ' What ſo great thing haſt thou gained, as that without an  
 ' which thou haſt leſt? Haſt he forſworn? Thou Oath; ma-  
 ' haſt loſt both thy ſelf and him! But haſt he not ny have, to  
 ' be credited  
 For- without one.

Forsworn? Even so thou hast lost, who hast driven him to transgress the Commandment. Let us expel this Disease from the Soul: Let us drive it now from the Court, and from all Merchants & Tradesmen's Shops. It was a greater Labour to us, Nowits said, do not you think, that Worldly things are corrected by the Transgressings of Divine Laws: Trade with-  
*But he doth not believe, saith he; for I have al-  
 so heard this of some, Unless I swear many Oaths  
 they will not believe me: Thou art the Cause of  
 these things, who swearest so promptly and ea-  
 sily. But if this were not, but it were manifest to  
 all, that thou wouldst not swear, believe me, more  
 Credit would be given to thy very BECK, then  
 those who swear abundance of Oaths. Whom  
 therefore do you more believe, me that do not  
 swear, or them that do swear?*

Object. *But, sayes he, thou art a Prince and a Bishop.*

What then, if I shall shew thee, that it is not this only? Answer me in Truth now: If I had sworn alwayes, and at every season, what Priviledge would my Principality have? No, thou seest that it is not for this: What gainest thou then, tell me now? Paul Hungerd, and do thou chuse rather to Hunger then to transgress any of God's Commandments: Why art thou so Unbelieving? Shalt thou chuse to do and to suffer all things, that thou mayst not swear, and shall not be Reward thee? But he

Our Doct- feeds daily Forswearers and great Swearers, and  
 rine made an will he give thee up to Famish, because thou bearken-  
 Axiom by est to him? Let all men know, that NONE MAY  
 Chrysostom.

SWEAR

' **SWEAR THAT ARE OF THIS CONGRE-**  
 ' **GATION;** and hereby we may be assured, and by  
 ' this Sign be distinguished from the Greeks and from  
 ' all men, and not only by the Faith (or Christian.  
 ' Profession.) Let us have this Mark from heavenly  
 ' things, that we may shine with it every where, as  
 ' the King's Flock. We are now known by the  
 ' Mouth and the Tongue, as the Barbarians, and  
 ' they that know to speak Greek; for we are dis-  
 ' cerned from the Barbarians by the Tongue. Tell  
 ' me now, How are Parrets known? Is it not that  
 ' they speak like Men? And we also may be known,  
 ' if we speak like the Apostles, and speak as the Angels:  
 ' For, if any one say, Swear, let him hear, that Christ  
 ' hath commanded, **EVEN NOT TO SWEAR:**  
 ' This sufficeth to bring in all Virtue. It is a cer-  
 ' tain Gate of Godliness, a Way bringing on unto the  
 ' Love of Wisdom (or Philosophy) It is a certain Ex-  
 ' ercise (or Mastery) Let us keep these things, that  
 ' we attain both present and future good things, by  
 ' the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, with whom, to the  
 ' Father, with the holy Spirit, be Glory, Dominion,  
 ' Honour, now and forever and ever, Amen.

' These Precepts were because of the Jewish  
 ' Depravation; but those perfect ones, to despise  
 ' and relinquish Riches, stand manfully, lay down  
 ' thy Life for Preaching; despise all Earthly  
 ' things; have nothing to do with this present  
 ' Life; do good to them that unjustly afflict  
 ' thee; if thou be defrauded, bless thou; if any  
 ' slander thee, honour thou him; be over all

M

things.

things: It was fit to hear these and such like things; But now we discourse concerning an Oath. And it is even as if when a man should come to Philosophy, he should draw him away from those his Teachers, and make him spell with Letters and Syllables.

Consider now, what a Confusion it would be for a man that hath a mighty Scrip, and a Staff, and a Gown to go to the Grammar-School with Boyes, and to learn the same things that they do; would it not be a Matter of much Laughter? but more from you; for there is not so great a Difference betwixt Philosophy and the Elements of Speech, as between the Jewish Masters, and Ours; but as much as is between Angels and Men. Tell me now, if any should call down an Angel from Heaven, and tell him, That he must stand and hear our Sermons, as if he must be thereby instructed; would it not be a ridiculous and confused thing? And if it were a ridiculous thing to be yet instructed by these; tell me now how great Condemnation, and how great Confusion were it, not to give Attention to those former? And how then is it not Confusion, that a Christian must be instructed, that he must not swear? But let us repress our Affections, that we be not more laught at. Let us now discourse concerning the Jewish Law to day: What is that, will he say? Do not use thy Mouth to Swear, nor be familiar with the Holy Name. Why? For as a Servant, if he be continually scourged, shall not be clear from Marks, so neither he that sweareth. Consider.

'der the Wiscom of that Wise Man; He said  
 'not, *Do not use thy Mind, but thy Mouth*; because  
 'he knew it to be all of the Mouth, and which  
 'is easily amended, &c. The Punishment here  
 'that is opposed to it, tells us, that it is not Per-  
 'jury, but *Swearing*; that is here to be removed;  
 'Therefore TO SWEAR IS A SIN. Ve-  
 'rily the Soul is full of such Wounds and Scars.  
 'But if thou swear because he doth not believe; say  
 'thou, Believe, or if thou wilt not, swear by thy  
 'self; and I do not say, that thou art contrary  
 'to the Law-giver: Far be it; for, saith he,  
 'Let your Word be YEA, YEA, and NAY,  
 'NAY; that herein I may condescend to you, and  
 'bring you to this, that I may free you from this Ty-  
 'rannical Custom. Will you learn why they al-  
 'lowed them of old to Swear, not to Forswear?  
 'It was because they swore by Idols: You must not  
 'be confounded in these Laws, in which they  
 'that were weak were conversant. For, if I now  
 'take a Greek, I do not forthwith enjoyn him this;  
 'but now I admonish him, That Christ must be known:  
 'But a Believer, and one who hath learned him, and  
 'heard, if he should use the same Indulgence and Liber-  
 'ty, as the Greek, What Profit and Advantage would  
 'there be?

'Christ hath made a Law, that NONE  
 'SWEAR; Tell me now what is done about  
 'this Law, lest perchance coming again, as the Hom. 10.  
 'Apostle saith, I do not spare. P. 101.

We hope none will dispute whether Chrysostom was a-  
 M 2 gainst



gainst *All Swearing*, or that he understood Christ's Doctrine as we do; yet no Body can Promise for them that endeavour to squeeze *Swearing* out of Christ's **SWEAR NOT AT ALL**. We have been the larger in this Authority, partly because he excellently disputes it; and partly, because our Case needs it; and lastly, to show *Christians* their Apostacy, that they may reform.

*Jerom. Libr. Epistol. part 3. Tract. 2. Epist. 2. Of Obedience, Knowledge and Revenge.*

LII. 'Thou saidst, if I mistake not, *That on this Account thou mayst justly render Evil for Evil, and oughtest to swear with them that swear, because the Lord sometimes swore, and rendered Evil for Evil.*

'*First*, I know that all things are not fit for us, that are Servants, which are agreeable to the Master, &c. I know the Lord oftentimes swore, *who hath forbidden us to Swear*. Nor must we rashly speak Evil of, or Blaspheme in this, that he forbad another what he did himself; because it may not be said, the Lord swore as Lord, whom none forbad to swear: It is not lawful for us as Servants to Swear; *because we are Forbidden by the Law of our Lord to Swear.* But lest we should suffer an Offence by his Example, since the time he forbad *Us* to Swear, *neither did he himself ever Swear, &c.*

God never  
swore pro-  
pally.

Upon *Zachary*, Book 2. Chap. 8.

'*And love ye not a False Oath*—As to the Lord's commanding in the Gospel, *But I say unto you, Swear not at all; but let your Word be YEA, YEA; NAY, NAY:* He that shall *Never Swear*, can never

'never Forswear : But he that sweareth, let  
 'him hear that which is written, *Thou shalt not*  
 'take the Name of the Lord thy God in a vain thing ;  
 'for these things I hate, saith the Lord, accord-  
 'ing to the words of Malachy, saying, *And ye did*  
 'all that I hate. In Piecepts which belong to  
 'Life, and are clear, we ought not to seek an  
 'Allegory, lest we seek a Knot in Rush, as sayes  
 'the Comick.

On Jeremy 4. Book 1. chap. 3.

*And thou shalt Swear the Lord liveth in Truth and Righteousness, and Judgment, &c.*

'And how doth the Gospel forbid us to Swear?  
 'But here it is said for a Confession, thou shalt  
 'Swear, and for the Condemnation of Idols, by  
 'which Israel swore. Lastly, Offences are taken  
 'away and he sweareth by the Lord; and what  
 'is said in the Old Testament, *the Lord liveth*, is Reason why  
 'an Oath, to the condemning of all the Dead, by Oaths were  
 'whom all Idolatry sweareth. And it is also to  
 'be minded, that an Oath hath these Compani-  
 'ons, Truth, Judgment and Righteousness; if  
 'these be wanting, it is not Swearing, but For-  
 'swearing.

Also on Matth. Book 1. chap. 5.

*But I say unto you, Swear not at all, neither by Heaven, &c.*

'The Jews had alwayes this Custom of Swear-  
 'ing by the Elements, as the Prophet's Speech  
 'often reproves them. He that sweareth, either  
 'reverenceth or loveth him by whom he swear-  
 'eth.

eth. In the Law it is commanded, that we must not swear but by the Lord our God.

The Jews Swearing by the Angels, and the City Jerusalem, and the Temple, and the Elements, did worship the Carnal Creatures with

This between the Two Stars seems a self-contradiction; but doubtless he intends it of the 2d Prohibition in a further Reason, why Oaths were permitted.

the Honour and Observance of God. \* Lastly, consider, that here the Saviour forbid not to swear by God, but by Heaven, &c. \* and this was allowed by the Law, as to little ones, that as they offered Sacrifices to God, lest they should sacrifice to Idols, so also they were suffered to Swear by God; Not that they did this rightly, but that it was better to yield that to God than to Devils. But the Truth of the Gospel doth not receive an Oath, since every faithful Word is for an Oath.

Those of after Times, that in some respect allow of an Oath, ground most upon the Authority of Augustine, as he from the larger acceptance of the Word Swear and Oath, which he extends to that which Nazianzen (as before) calls but a firm Faithfulness joyned to his words, which yet he will not admit of, but to a Paul, a Planter of Churches, speaking by the Spirit of God to them he had begotten in the Gospel, in Danger to be seduced by False Apostles, and to sleight him, and seek a Proof of Christ speaking in him, compelled by them to seem a Fool in glorying, and so driven; and no otherwise, to seem a Swearer too, yea, even to an Augustine, and so to compel him (even Augustine) to say, It is a hard Question; I have alwayes avoided it. But though he durst not condemn it altogether out of Reverence to the Apostle, which he thought used it, because of the Form of Speech; yet to shew that he did

did little encourage men to practise it, as any Act at all of the Worship of God, much less an *August 13*. He saith, *That False Swearing is Deadly; True Swearing, Dangerous; No-Swearing, Safe; God only Swears Safely, who cannot be deceived.*

*Augustine de Sermone Domini, Serm. 28.*

LIII. And *Augustine* himself confesseth. That it was usual to alledge *Christianity* for not Swearing, bringing in one Saying, *It is not lawful for a Christian to Swear, when an Oath is required of him; I am a Christian; it is not lawful to swear.* And on *Psalm 88*, as allowing the Unlawfulness, he saith, *It is well that God hath forbidden men to Swear, lest by Custom of it (in as much as we are apt to Mistake) we commit Perjury. There is none but God can safely Swear, &c.*

If men can't Swear safely, then it is more dangerous to swear then not to swear, and it is better for People, nay, they are bound to refuse it.

And in that very Book, which is alledged for it, he saith, *I say unto you, SWEAR NOT AT ALL, lest by Swearing ye come to a Facility of Swearing; from a Facility to a Custom; and from a Custom ye fall into Perjury.* But if any think that Book makes most for them, let them consider the Author hath retracted it; for what Cause let himself speak in the end of his Book of *Retractions*: For sure, that which we have here cited out of it, agreeth with his other Works, which contain much more to this Purpose.

de mendac.

It is obscure & intricate.

Where-

De Verb.  
Jacobi, Ante  
omnia noli-  
te jurare,  
Serm. 28.

'Where, sayes he, wouldst thou chuse to  
walk? Upon the Brink of a Precipice, or far  
from it? I think far from it. So he which  
'swears, walks in the Border, *and walketh with un-  
'sure Feet*, because humane: If thou stumblest,  
'down thou goest; if thou fallest, down thou  
goest.

\* If it be-  
longs to the Righteous-  
ness of the Kingdom of that walk, walk safely; their Place is sure, and their  
Heaven, Not Foot-steps shall not slide; but the Wicked's Feet are in  
to Swear, *slippery Places*, where *Augustine* says, Swearers walk.  
then what  
will become

of those that Christ in *Mat. 5*, 'It is the Righteousness of the  
not only 'Pharisees, not to Forswear; This he confirmeth,  
break that 'who forbiddeth to swear, which \* *belongeth to the*  
Command- 'Righteousness of the Kingdom of Heaven: For, as  
ment of, 'he which doth not speak, cannot speak a Lye;  
*Swear not at* 'so he cannot Forswear, *which doth not Swear*.  
all, but teach 'He goes on to excuse *Paul*, and sayes, 'That an  
men so to do? nay, pur- 'Oath is not among good things, but among † evil  
nism men for 'things, and used for the Infirmary of others,  
not obeying 'which is Evil, from which we pray, that we  
such Anti- 'may be daily delivered.  
Evangelical  
Doctrine.

† Then cer- But there is this to be said for *Augustine*, and some o-  
tainly they thers after him, that he and they write not clearer in a  
are to be re- Point so constantly maintained; His *Horizon* then was  
jected of over-casting apace. *Apostasy*, as a mighty Torrent,  
the true *Christi- Christian* Doctrine and Discipline; but like an Unruly  
ans.

and impetuous Sea brook down the Banks of Primitive Society, and made way for all sort of Superstition, worldly Interest & Fraud; that, to say *no more* than he did, was to incur, perhaps, the Censure of the *Grandees* of his Age, who had joyn'd Earthly Policy to *Christian*-Religion, and cast off the Blessed Yolk of their Self-denying Lord, to swim in the Delicious Liberty of the World: A *Time* full of such Circumstances as seem'd to conspire the Return of *Oaths*, that were not dead, but retired only: For as men grew *False* and *Distrustful*, Truth became burdensom, and *Yea* and *Nay* no Security with them; and therefore declin'd, or rather exil'd them their Government; Old *Judaism* or *Gentilism* pleas'd them better. 'Twas harder Living that Watchful Life that was sufficient to credit a *Yea* or *Nay*, then to take an Oath, that dependeth upon the saying of so many Words only: This was considerable, and made Swearing then, and continues it grateful to our very Times. But sad it is, that *Oaths* rid thus in Sate, while *Integrity* went Barefoot, and Evangelical *Yea* and *Nay* turn'd off for a *Non-sufficient*, and that too, not without *Fines*, *Prisons*, and a great deal of *Reproach*. However, we must acknowledge, that the Gravity and *Christian* Care of this Person, and other his Contemporaries, appeared in not only dissuading, but deterring those Ages from the *Brink* (for so he calls *Swearing at all*) and turning their Faces after the *Woman*, now on her Flight into the *Wilderness*: During all which Time, the *Witnesses*, though fewest in Number, and mystically clothed in Sack-cloth, forbore not to prophesie even in this Particular.

And we hope, having no certain Knowledge to the contrary, that most of them, at least that were Men fearing God, and serving him according to what they knew and in that Manner they were perswaded was most acceptable to him. And as *Irenaeus* said of the *Poets* and *Philosophers*, These Men, every one seeing that which was connatural from Part of the Divine-sown-Reason, spake excellently, and

where right and consistent with themselves, they are ours, Iren. lib. 5. cap. 18. So we sincerely declare of Men differing from us, that as we desire the Good of all, so we can own the Good in all, and the Truth in all, and receive it from them, though in other Respects our Adversaries; and would have all to do the like with us and each other: And howbeit our Adversaries may have hard Thoughts of some of th: Persons our Matter leads us to instance, as Men interested in the Doctrine and Practices of those darker Times they lived in, and of us for making Use of such for Authorities; yet we hope they would also judge it an hard and very cruel Thing to repute them utter Cast-aways. And though we know that Men differ within themselves, and all of them more or less from the Truth, yet since there may be some Truth and Sincerity, we cannot but acknowledge and embrace: And we hope, the Reasons and Authorities of others they bring, and the Concessions and Confessions they make, may, and indeed ought to be of Weight in that Point, at least to shew, that it is no new, strange or unreasonable Thing for us to refuse Oaths. And though some might with a Mixture of Superstition and Will-worship, undertake and maintain that Strictness and Preciseness, which some of the holy Ancients by the Spirit of Truth were led to practise (the ancient Histories of whom, from Eye-Wit-

Euseb. Pam. nesses, as the Word signifies, of some of them, we in a Socr. Schol. great Part believe) And some later more Enlightened and Evagr. &c. Zealous Men, taking Offence thereat, but especially at the Hypocrisie and Abomination, palliated by such fair Pretences, have streined much in Opposition to that Evangelical Doctrine, yet is the Doctrine nevertheless a Truth in it self. Nor can we believe that all that were accounted Hereticks, were out of the Catholick or Universal Church; for the Word Catholick signifies Universal, containing all that are 1 Thes. 1. 1. in the Church. (that is in God the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ) in all Times, and those were not all of the same Phil. 3. 15. Mind in all Things, as may be read in the Holy Scriptures, and also in Eusebius and other Ecclesiastical Histories, where

Men,



Men are commended for Holiness and Virtue, yet at much Difference in some Things. *Synesius*, though he believed *Evangel.* 1. 1. not the *Resurrection*, was chosen to minister, and after *cap.* 11. c. 9. ward was made a Bishop, the Charity of *Christians* was so great in that Age. And some accounted *Heretics*, suffered Martyrdom, that are commended or excused by *Eusebius*; *Ensch. Eccl.* one in particular that dyed with *Polycarpus*, and another *Hist.* 8 c. 28. called *Asclepius*, called *Marcionites*. See also the begin 1. 4. c. 15. ning of his eighth Book concerning the *Divisions* among them that afterward suffered for the Testimony of the Universal or *Catholic Truth*; nor can we receive their Judgment, that branded those with the Name of *Heretics*, *Pelagians*, &c. who denyed *Swearing* in those declining *A. Britain*, *anges*, and suppressed their Works under that Name and *Al.* 400. wrote person only; not allowing them to speak for themselves. Notable to us of latter Times. Books, faith

We see how unjustly we our selves are aspersed in almost every Doctrine we hold, and that under Pretence of serving who lived God; particularly, with seeking to work our *Salvation* soon after by our own Power, and when they have made us this Belief, *him* they bestow *Pelagianism* upon it (for Fathers have Right to name their own Children) whereas of all other People, we especially disclaim our own Ability, and wait to be renewed and guided by the Spirit of Christ, and to be found in his Righteousness, and therefore on the other hand reputed *Phanatics*, *Enthusiasts*, &c. and mocked for being moved by the Spirit, following the Light, &c. But let their Example or Authority be as it will, or however they were in other Respects, the Doctrine of the ancient primitive Fathers, and Practice of that Church, as also the Doctrine of famous Men among themselves, neither of which Sort dare they condemn for *Heretics*, do sufficiently defend them from the Aspersions of *Heresy* in that Particular: And so we shall come to our remaining Testimonies, it being our Business, not to maintain every one of their Principles we cite; but this Doctrine of *Swear not at all*, to have had the Voice of several Ages to confirm it.

The ancient *Waldenses*, reputed to have continued *Uncorrupted* with the *Grossness* of the *Apostasy*, ever since the *Apostles Times* (see their *History* in *P. Perin*, *S. Moreland* and *Ep. Usher de Success.*) we have good Cause to say, *denied the taking of any Oath in what Sense the Primitive Christians and Fathers refused, and that was altogether.*

See *Baronius*, an. 1310. Sure, their *Enemies* charg'd them with it for above three hundred Years, and we cannot find they then denied the against *John Wickliff* and *Waldenses*. Charge: We suppose none will attempt to prove they did; Though one of our *Adversaries* joyns with theirs, traducing them for *Perjurers*, and with them abuses that worthy *Reiner. Rub.* and learned Man *Ep. Usher*, who defends them from that improbable and contradictory *Asperision*, of *Lying and For-*

*W. Widsford*, swearing, and yet of *Denying to Swear*; who sayes, that *Gui Carmel.* they were as far from *Lying and Forswearing*, as their *Ent-*

*Voss. Histor.* mies were from *Modesty and Truth*, which did appear in *Pelag. l. 5 p. 2* that they were charg'd by them, *Not to swear at all*: Peruse *Bp. Usher*, that part of his Book *de Successione*, where he treats of them; *de Success.* and where also you may read of their *Succession*, how that the *Syrians & Armenians* came out of the East into *Thracia*, thence in process of Time into *Bulgaria* and *Sclavonia*, thence into *Italy* and *Lumbardy*, and were called by several Names, of several People, or at several Times, as *Manichees*, *Waldenses*, *Albingenses*, *Cathari* or *Puritans*, *Patrins*, *Publicans*, *Humiliati*, &c. who were charged with denying Swearing; And how that several of the better sort of the Clergy, and of the nobler Laity (who refused the present Use of *Baptism* and the *Lord's Supper*) were burnt under the Name of *Manichees*. *Suarez* also reckons up the *Catharists*, *Alba*, *Bagnald*, and others which *Prætorius* and *Castro* relate, the *Waldenses*, the *Anabaptists*, &c. And which *Jansenius* also out of *Augustine*, *Epist. 89.* the *Pelagians* out of *Hilary Syracusanus*, *Epist. 88.* *Bernard* *homil. 69.* on *Cant.* The *Fathers*, sayes he, seem to favour this Opinion, especially *Basil*, *hom. in Psal. 14.* *Chrysostom* *hom. 13. 78. ad popul.* and *17. on Mat.* And *Theophylact* on *Mat. 5.* *Origen Tract 35. Mat.* *Tertullian de Idololat.* *Clem.*

de Juramen-  
tis, l. 1. c. 1, 2.

Clem. Rom. 1. 6. *Constitut. Apost.* Maldonat on Mat. 5. 34. *saieth, the Anabaptists, the Wickliffists, some Syracusans, a kind of Pelagians, denyed Swearing, and that Origen was not far off that Opinion.* Here the *Hereticks*, as accounted, and the *Fathers* are reckoned up together, as holding the same Opinions: Sure in this they were not *Hereticks*; for then the *Fathers* should be condemned with them, and called *Hereticks* too, as well as they, or else these Men are partial and contradictory.

On *Jam.* 5. of the words of the Apostle, thus, *Ser.* 30. 'Perhaps it is meet for the Lord alone to swear, who cannot forswear. And so he goes on to shew how hard it is for men to avoid Perjury.

In *Serna.* 3. *ad competentes*: 'Let them not only abstain from Perjury, but from Swearing; because he doth not Lye who saith, *A man Swearing much, shall not depart from Iniquity, and the Plague shall not depart from his House, Eccles.* 23.

But if it were an *August Act* of the Worship of God, he would on the contrary have exhorted at least, if not commanded them to swear, which we never read any Command for, but in Opposition to Idols, even in the time of the Old-Testament-Writings, as the Testimonies before alledged declare, and in the time of the New, no Command at all; but on the contrary, 'a Prohibition by the Lord himself, and another by his Apostle, nor any Example; for that of *Paul's* was but an Asseveration, as by the Testimonies already produced, and to be alledged appears: For besides those of the *Fathers* and other *Doctors*, of late *Bp. Ro. Sanderson* in his *Oxford Lectures*, shows, that is sometimes used in the Form of an Oath which is no Oath; and so he defendeth *Joseph* from breaking God's Command, that is, not to have sworn so; and therefore not to have sinned, but to have

Agreeing  
with Chry-  
sostom.

have used an Asseveration, as if he had said, *as sure as Pharaoh lieth ye are Spies*: So may Paul be defended against the breaking Christ's Command, as if he had said, *as sure as ye*, or as some Greek Copies have it, *We Rejoyce in Christ Jesus*: For *ναι*, which they translate, *I protest by*, hath sometimes the same signification that *ναι*, *yea*, hath, as may be seen in *Scapula*; For he sayes, *ναι* (translated, *I protest by*) is a Particle, sometimes of *granting* and *affirming*; sometimes it is put for *verily, indeed*; and he interprets *ναι* by the same word, which is translated *yea*, which *Scapula* saith, is also sometimes used in *Swea- ring*, and cites *Aristophanes* and *Xenophon* for it: And that *ναι* is used also in *Composition*, for *affirming*, as in *νιχιλος*, *profusus*, *lavishing*; which cannot signifie *Swea- ring*.

And how easily might the Transcriber, through that common Use, alter a Letter, being of the same signification, seeing in that very Verse, in some Copies, there is not only in another word an Alteration of a Letter *μεταρον* & *ναρισαι*, *our* and *your*, but in another word five Letters, *αποδρισαι* & *αποδισαοισαι*, referring it to the Verse before; yea, a whole Word of Seven Letters added, *αδελφον*. And of about Thirty Greek Copies there are not Two of them that agree, but they interfer, some in one place, some in another; inso much that there are Thousands of various Readings, which many of the ancient Fathers diversly follow, some one, some another. See the (various Lectiōnes) *Variae Lectiōnes Græc. Nov. Test.* in Bp. Walton's *Polyglot*, vol. 6. also the *Preface* and *Beza's Epistle* therein: And consider how hard a thing it is to construe, limit, and lay the Interpretation of the Sayings of Christ and his Apostles, and the Weight of a Doctrine, and that as men would avoid Penalties too, upon a Letter (which yet alters not the Signification) upon Credit of the Transcribers, especially in Paul's Epistles, wherein Peter sayes, *many things are hard to be understood, and wrested by the Unlearned*, which he must needs intend in such

*Learning*

*Learning* as he himself had, and that was not of *Worldly Academics*; but from the Holy Spirit. And these words, which are joyned with that Particle, are not such words as men use in Swearing, but for a Ground of his Fidelity, and a Remedy against their Incredulity, and questioning of the Weight of his Assertions, amongst whom other Teachers were preferred, and who compelled him to speak as a Fool, he says, even to commend himself. So that it is not strange, if to them, and not to other Churches, he used such forcible Asseverations from the Testimony that they had of him, of the Truth and Work of Christ in him, and the Record thereof upon his Soul, and his Joy therein, that he spoke the Truth to them, and did not lye; so that he brings his Perfections against their Imperfections, to gain Belief, which can amount to no more then a Voluntary Condescension for the time being, and cannot prove or countenance a Compulsory, Promissory, Formal, Ceremonial Oath to be exacted or taken up for the future.

But Mark, that the word *Oath*, or *Swear*, used both by Christ and the Apostle *James* in their Prohibition, is never used by *Paul* in his Asseverations, neither doth he ever apply it to the Brethren; but speaking to them of the Oath that was in old time, and of men (indefinitely) that use to swear, he saith, *Men swear, and to them an Oath is for Confirmation*; that is, as among the *Jews* and *Heathen*; he doth not say to *Us*, or to *You*; or *We*, or *Ye* swear, who are not in Strife, which, if had that been true, it might have stood the present *Oath-Advocates* in stead: So that such as will have it, that *Paul* swore, must being the word *swear*, or *Oath*, to prove it; But if they could, his Example then were not enough to invalidate to us now the Command of Christ, for the Abolishing of Swearing, no more then his shaving his Head at *Cenchrea*, because he had a Vow; or his purifying himself in the Temple, and offering with the four *Jews* that had a Vow; or his circumcising of *Timothy*, because of the *Jews*,  
can

can warrant us to the Observation of those legal Rites and Ceremonies, which so long since are not only *dead*, but *deadly*, as the Fathers and Bp. *Sanderson* distinguish about them. And those that would therefore bring in *Swearing* and *Vows*, might under the same Colour, bring in *sacrificing* and *circumcising* too.

L. i. c. 15.

LIV. *ISIDORUS PELUSIOTA*, who as *Euagrius Schol.* writes, lived at the same time with *Cyrril*, and that the Fame of his Sayings and Doings was spread far and near, and rise in every man's Mouth, that *He led on Earth the Life of an Angel*, and wrote many notable Works, amongst which are his Epistles, in one whereof he writeth against *Swearing* thus; 'If thou art  
' of our Flock, and art ordered under a good  
' Shepherd, deny the Nature of Wild Beasts,  
' and obey his Voice that *Forbiddeth to Swear AT*  
' *ALL*. Moreover, not to Swear is, *not to require an*  
' *Oath of another*: Now, if thou wilt not swear, nei-  
' ther require thou an Oath of another, for two  
' Causes; either because he who is asked loves  
' Truth, or on the contrary to Lye: If the man  
' speaks Truth usually, *he will alwayes speak Truth*  
' *without an Oath*; but if he is a Liar, *he will Lye,*  
' *though he Swear*: Therefore for both these Cau-  
' ses, *one ought not to require an Oath*.

Ep. lib. 1.  
Epist. 155.

Not to  
require an  
Oath by any  
means of an-  
other man.

On Mat. 5.

LV. *CHROMATIUS*, Bishop of *Aquileia*, about or not long after that time, upon these words, *But I say unto you, Swear not at all*, paraphraseth thus; 'The Law (saith he) given by  
*Moses,*

(109)

'Moses received a Growth, Proficiency or Per-  
 'fection by the Grace of the Doctrine of the  
 'Gospel. In the Law it was commanded, not  
 'to Forswear; *but in the Gospel NOT TO*  
 'SWEAR: Which very thing heretofore  
 'the Holy Ghost did premeditate that Solomon  
 'should command or teach, saying, *Let not thy*  
 '*Mouth use to Swear.* And again, As a Servant  
 'beaten continually, is not lessened from the  
 'Paleness of his Stripes; so every one that  
 'swareth, shall not be purg'd from Sin. *Where-*  
 '*fore it is not meet for us to Swear AT ALL:* For,  
 'what need is there for any of us to Swear,  
 'seeing that it is not at all *LAWFUL FOR US*  
 '*TO LYE*; whose Words ought always to be so  
 'True, so *very Faithful*, that they may be accounted  
 '*for Oaths.* And therefore the Lord not only  
 'forbids us to Forswear, *BUT EVEN TO*  
 '*SWEAR*; that we may not seem to speak  
 'Truth *ONLY* when we swear; That we may  
 'not think that those whom he hath appointed  
 'to be True in all their Speech, may have Liber-  
 'ty to Lye without an Oath: For this is the  
 'Cause of an Oath, Because that every one who  
 'swareth, doth swear to this End, that he will  
 'speak that which is true, and therefore the  
 'Lord would have no Difference to be *between*  
 '*their Oath and their Word:* Because as in an Oath  
 '*there ought to be no Perfidiousness,* so in our Words  
 '*there ought to be no Lye,* in that both Perjury and  
 'Lying is condemned by the Punishment of the  
 'Judg-



Judgment of God, seeing the Scripture saith;  
*The Mouth which Lyeth killeth the Soul*: Therefore  
 whosoever speaketh Truth, sweareth; be-  
 cause it is written, *A Faithful Witness doth not*  
*Lye*. And therefore holy Scripture (not with-  
 out Cause) often relates, *that God hath sworn*, be-  
 cause whatsoever is spoken of God, who is  
 true, and cannot lye, is counted for an Oath,  
 because all which he speaks is true. — Now  
 we find God sometimes swearing, but it is for  
 the Perfidiousness of the *Jewish* Infidelity; who  
 think that all Truth consists in the Credit of  
 an Oath; Therefore also God would swear, that  
 they who would not trust God speaking, might  
 trust him when he swore: Therefore our Lord  
 saith, *Ye have heard it said of old, Thou shalt not*  
*Forswear*; But I say unto you, **SWEAR NOT AT**  
**ALL, &c.**

On Deut. 6. LVI. THEODORET on Deut. 6. pag. 57.

Why doth the Law command, that they should  
 swear by God? *Left they should swear by false Gods*:  
 A smart and true Answer. For he said the same by the Prophet, *If thou ta-*  
*kest the Names of Baalam out of thy Mouth, and*  
*shalt swear, The Lord liveth with Truth*: And here,  
 when he had said, *Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God,*  
*and him only shalt thou serve, and shalt cleave unto*  
*him and shalt swear by his Name*, he subjoyned,  
*Ye shall not walk after other or strange Gods; which*  
*are of the Gods of the Nations, which are round a-*  
*bout you.* *Lya* saith the same.

LVI.

L VII. *Ordinary Gloss.* on *Mat. 5. 37.* hath  
this Sentence, 'A Faithful Speech ought to be ac-  
'counted for an Oath.

L VIII. *Johannes Damascenus*, Parallel.  
lib. 3. cap. 16. bringeth a Testimony of one  
*Nilus*, against Swearing. There was one nam'd  
*NILUS* in *Egypt*, a Martyr, mention'd by *Euse-  
bius*. Another Bishop of *Constantinople*, spoa-  
ken of by *Socrates*, both very famous; the words  
are these: 'It is not profitable to Swear, but very  
'pernicious, and execrable and abominable: Where-  
'fore hereafter make an End of Swearing; nor commit  
'such a thing, as that thy Tongue use Oaths. In the  
same place he alledgeth Testimonies out of *F.  
Chrysostom*, Hom. 13. ad *Populum Antiochenum*.

*Nilus for-  
bids Oaths.*

L IX. *CYRILL*, whom *Evagrius Scholast.* On *Jer. 4.*  
*styles Renown'd*, in his Commentary on *Jeremy*  
the 4th; And shall swear, the Lord liveth in Truth,  
and in Judgment, and in Righteousness; saith, 'Let  
'us look, who swear, how we do not swear in  
'Judgment, but without Judgment; so that our  
'Oaths are by Custom rather than Judgment;  
'we are lashed therefore, and the Word repro-  
'ving that same thing, saith, and if he shall swear  
'the Lord liveth in Truth, in Righteousness and Judg-  
'ment: For we know it is said in the Gospel by  
'the Lord unto his Disciples, But I say unto you, that  
'you Swear NOT AT ALL. But let us consider  
'also this Saying, and if God grant, both shall

'be rewarded: For, perhaps, it first behoveth  
 'to swear in Truth, in Judgment, and in Righte-  
 'ousness; and after one hath made Proficiency,  
 'he may be made worthy NOT TO SWEAR  
 'AT ALL, but may have YEA, not needing  
 'Witnesses that IT IS SO; and may have NAY,  
 'not needing Witnesses that IT IS VERILY NOT  
 'So.

Cyril. See And sayes Cyril further, 'Let none because  
 Catena. 65. 'he hears that God swore to *Abraham*, use to  
 Gra. Pair. 'swear: For, as that which is called *Wrath* in  
 on Luk. 1. p. 'God, is not Wrath; nor doth it signifie a Passi-  
 23. 'on, but a Punishing Power, or some such like  
 'Motion; so neither is Swearing SWEARING:  
 'For, God doth not Swear; but shews the Certain-  
 'ry, that what he saith shall come to pass, cer-  
 'tainly: For the Oath of God is *his own Word*,  
 'filling the Hearers, and making every one be-  
 'lieve, that what he hath promised and said,  
 'shall surely come to pass.

On Psal. 94. LX. CASSIODORUS, on *Psalim 94.* saith,  
 'Hence it is, that men are forbidden to swear,  
 agreeeth with 'because by their own Power they cannot per-  
 Augustine. 'form their Promises, This *Cassiodorus* was Fa-  
 'mous about the year 500.

On Eccles. 8. LXI. OLYMPIODORUS was also Famous  
 'about the same time, who on *Eccles. 8.* saith thus,  
 'Keep the Mouth of the King, and do not study  
 'concerning the Word of the Oath of God, but  
 'go

go far from the Face of it, viz. of my Oath;  
that is, *Refrain and depart from it, and do not AT  
ALL endure to take an Oath into thy Mouth.*

**LXII. ISIDORUS HISPALENSIS** was famous  
about that time, and liv'd with him they call'd *St.  
Gregory*; who disliked the bringing in the Title of  
*Universal Bishop*, and also the Use of Swearing: his  
Words are these, *Many are slow to believe which  
are moved at the Belief of the Word: But they do grie-  
vously offend, who compel them to swear that speak to  
them.*

Chap. 31.

**LXIII. ANTIOCHUS** said to be a Man famous  
for Holiness & Learning, living in *Palestine* about  
the time of *Heraclius*, the Emperor, that was about  
the Year 614. In his *Pandects* of Scripture, *Hom. 62.*  
concerning Swearing saith thus in the *Greek* (which  
see; for the *Latine* Translation is in some things  
imperfect) *The old Law, as giving Laws to Chil-  
dren, which for their Age were not capable of  
more holy Doctrine, nor unseasonably commands,  
To Swear nothing to their Neighbour in Deceit;  
But us our Lord and Saviour commandeth, NOT TO  
SWEAR AT ALL, neither out of Season, nor in  
Season; for he saith to us, Let your YEA be YEA,  
and your NAY, NAY; for whatsoever is more, is  
of the Evil.*

And saith he to the first People of a *Stiff Neck*,  
*I commanded, Thou shalt not forswear, but shalt per-  
form thy Vows unto the Lord, as to them that were*

Hard.

Hard-hearted and Disobedient to me: But to you  
 that believe in me, to whom I have given Power to be-  
 come the Sons of God, that are born again of the holy Spi-  
 rit, I command, NOT TO SWEAR AT ALL,  
 neither little, nor great Oaths; that a Difference  
 may plainly appear who are Bastards, and who true Sons.  
 Let us therefore, Dear Friends, fear him, who hath  
 vouchsafed us so much Honour, even the Lord and  
 Father, with all Fear, as sincere ingenuous Ser-  
 vants let us keep his Commandments, NOT TO  
 SWEAR AT ALL, lest he say as in Isa. 1. I have  
 nourish'd and brought up Children, and they have re-  
 bell'd against me: Let's not be Sleighters and De-  
 spisers of this Commandment of the Lord; for  
 those things that are said and done without an Oath,  
 are more credited by Men, and more pleasing to  
 God.

Beda in Ep.  
 Jam. c. 5.

LXIV. In the next Century, BEDA, an English  
 man, the most famous of those Dayes, and styl'd  
 Venerable, in his Exposition upon these words, Be-  
 fore all things, my Brethren, swear not, &c. saith,  
 Because he desires entirely to draw out the dead-  
 ly Poison of the Tongue in his Hearers, he forbid  
 to detract or slander any man, or to judge his  
 Neighbour, who forbid to grieve in Adversities,  
 which are open Sins; he adds this also (seeming  
 light to some) that he may take away the Cu-  
 stom of Swearing. For that this also is not to be  
 esteem'd a light matter, plainly appears to them,  
 that carefully consider that Sentence of the Lord,  
 where

where he saith, *Of every idle Word that men shall speak, they shall give Account in the Day of Judgment.*

[That ye fall not into Condemnation.] Therefore (saith he) I restrain you from the Fault of Swearing, lest by Swearing frequently true things, ye fall sometimes also into Forswearing; but stand so far from the Vice of Forswearing, that you will not Swear neither, but by the greatest Necessity. But he also falls under the Judgment of Guilt, who although he never Forswear, yet sweareth true oftener when there is need; namely, he offends in the very Idleness of superfluous Speech, and he offendeth the Judge, which forbade both every unprofitable Word and OATH.

From this chief man among the English of that time, it is manifest that this was the Doctrine they then held, as further appears from *H. Spelman*, that learn'd English Knight, *Spelm. Brit.* in his Book of *Brittish Councils, Canons, &c.* in the *Excep. Council. p.* *sions or select Collections of Egbert*, Arch Bishop of York, 260.

Artic. 19. That no Priest who soever may swear an Oath, but let him speak all things simply, in Purity and Truth. And in the same Author and Council, Art. 18. the chief of *Monasteries, Priests & Deacons* should say (without Swearing) when they were to purge and clear themselves, only thus, *I speak the Truth in Christ, I lye not.*

And in pag. 259. In England, at the Council of *Berghamsted* about the Year 750, Artic. 17. That a Bishop or a King's Word or Affirmation without an Oath is irrefragable.

This agrees with *Blasparis Canons* above mention'd. And at this Day in some Countries, as the *Electoral Arch-Bishops* in Germany, of *Cölen, Mentz and Triers*, and many Noble Men in their Station, speak without an Oath, upon their solemnity &c,

Certainly

Certainly then it is much below the *Nobility* of true *Christians* in their *Spiritual Station to Swear*, as *Chrysostom* and the *Ancients* have well observ'd.

LXV. *HAIMO* lived about 840. who on the *Revelations* saith, 'That it's lawful only for  
' *Men and Angels to swear; but to Men it is forbidden.*

On the *Re-*  
*velations*, p.  
196.

LXVI. *AMBROSIVS ANSERETUS*, *Gallus*  
*Presbyter*: 'Seeing the Lord cohibits the Faith-  
' ful from every Oath, saying, *Swear not at all,*  
' *neither by Heaven, &c. but let your Tea be Tea, and*  
' *your Nay, Nay;* what abounds more then them  
' is from the Evil: Who stretcheth out his Hand  
' to Heaven, and sweareth by him that liveth  
' forever, Are not his Sayings and A'ings set for  
' Examples for Believers to imitate? But only  
' in that men are often deceived by an Oath; but  
' he, who is the Truth, never is deceived; for  
' he would nor have prohibited men from an Oath  
' if he had not known Sin to be in it: For, what  
' do we understand to be figured by the Hand of  
' the Angel, unless (as before noted) a Dispen-  
' sation of Redemption of Mankind? For, his  
' Hand is the Operation of our Salvation; al-  
' though also, if it may be so said, the same Son  
' be his Right-Hand, as when the Word of the  
' Father speaketh, he sheweth that he is the  
' Word of the Father.

LXVII.



LXVIII. *THEOPHYLACT*, Arch-Bishop of the *Bulgarians*, whom some place in the Ninth Century, others after; to be sure very Famous; being as it were their Apostle; in his Comment on *Mat. 5.* saith, 'To swear, or adjure more to Yea or Nay, is of the Devil. 'Moreover (sayes he) if thou shouldst say, *That the Law also given to Moses was evil, because it commandeth to swear*, Learn, that then it was not 'Evil to swear; but after Christ, it is Evil, as also to be circumcised; and in brief, whatsoever 'is \**Jewish*: For, it is convenient for a Child to suck, but not at all for a Man.

\* He makes Oaths Jewish, at least in Opposition to Evangelical; because imperfect, & permitted to the Jews in Condescension.

LXIX. *Barnard*; 'The Truth needs not 'an Oath. *De modo bene vivendi*, Ser. 32. *De perjurio*. 'A Faithful Word holds the Place of 'an Oath; as he cannot Lye who doth not Speak, 'so he cannot Forswear who doth not undertake 'to Swear: grounded on *Matthew 5.*

LXX. *PASCHALIUS RATBERTUS* on *Mat. 5.* *Ye have heard, &c.* 'In this place, as also every 'where in those things, the Perfection in Righteousness is renew'd; for by what every one swears, 'he either worships, loveth or fears it; Therefore 'by the Law, for the carnal People it was lawful 'to swear by God, and this was allow'd as to little 'Ones, that as they offer'd Sacrifices to God, lest 'they should offer them to Idols; so also it was permitted

mitted to them to swear by God: Not that they  
did this well; but because it was better to give it  
to God then to Devils.

LXXI. *OTHO BRUNFELSIUS* on Mat. 5.  
But let your Word be Yea, &c. That is the Duty of  
a Christian man, to be so sure in his Words, that  
being Unsworn he surpass any Jew or Heathen,  
swearing by all his holy Things, namely in these  
bare Words only, Yea, Yea; Nay, Nay: Such Faith-  
fulness & Constancy is commended in good men  
by prophane Authors; Read *Seneca, Cicero, Vale-  
rius Maximus.*

But thou wilt say, I shall not be trusted, unless I  
swear: Even so it is permitted by the Popes, to swear  
good Words in a good Cause. But such Distrust ought  
not to reign in the Faithful: But if we trust not  
Words, what should an Oath do? It is a Proverb,  
None is less trusted then he which shall often swear.  
Moreover, Who gave Power to Popes, to break the  
Command of God?

LXXII. *DRUTHMARIUS* on Math. 5. Left  
the Jews should Swear by Idols Names, the Lord  
suffered them to swear by his own Name.

— The Lord taught us Perfection, that  
such Trust is to be among Christians, that there  
should be no need to interpose the Name of God for  
Witness.

LXXIII. *FANSENIUS* on Math. 5. If  
all

‘all *Christians* were such as they ought to be, it  
 ‘would certainly be *needless* both to require and  
 ‘take an Oath — I think this more *Christian*;  
 ‘and not to Swear at all, nor Compel to Swear, more  
 ‘*Spiritual* — Yea and Amen are the same, 2 Cor. 1.  
 ‘not Swearing, but Affirming: So Christ swore  
 ‘not.

See Bernard, Hom. 69. in Cant. *De more bene vivendi*, Sermon. 32.

LXXIV. ALBERTUS MAGNUS, on Mat. 5.

‘Swearing is by Indulgence.

Thomas Aquinas cites Rabanus on Mat. 5.

LXXV. Alex. de Ales citeth HUG. CARDINAL, saying, ‘The Lord Forbad Swearing,  
 ‘lest any should desire to swear as a Good Thing, p. 3. q. 59.  
 ‘also that none might fall into Perjury.

LXXVI. REMIGIUS on Rom. 1. ‘Who  
 ‘never Swears, never Forswears.

LXXVII. RUFFINUS on Psal. 14. ‘Not  
 ‘to Swear at all is of Perfect Men.

See also Smaragdus on Mat. 5.

Tietmannus on Psal. 14.

Brugensis on Mat. 5.

Ludolphus Carthusianus, vita Christi, part. 2. cap. 12.

Rupertus, de operibus spiritus sancti, fol. 453.

Baptista Folengius, on Psal. 15.

Nic. Lyra and Ordinary Gloss on Mat. 5.

See. Biblio-  
theca veter.  
Patrum.

LXXVIII. EUTHYMIUS ZAGABONUS;  
on *Matth. 5. p. 43.* saith thus; Again, ye have  
heard, that it hath been said to them of old time,  
*Thou shalt not Forswear, &c. but I say unto you, Swear  
not at all, &c.* Now the old Law saith, Thou  
shalt not Forswear, but shalt offer to the Lord  
thine Oaths; which he added that he might  
put Fear into the Swearer, that he should not  
Forswear, knowing that God, which knows  
all things, undertakes the Oath. [*But I say unto  
you, Swear not at all*] For he that easily sweareth,  
sometimes perchance may Forswear, by the Cu-  
stom of Swearing; but he that Swears by no  
means, will never Forswear. Besides, thou  
that swearest, so be thou do not Forswear, thou  
observest the Worship of God; but Swear-  
ing by no means, thou dost promote it: And the  
other is the part of mean and imperfect Philo-  
sophy, *but this of that which is the highest and perfect.*  
The other, *Thou shalt not Forswear*, is written in  
the Book of *Exodus*; but this, *Thou shalt restore  
to the Lord thine Oaths*, in the Book of *Deuterono-  
my*, but in other words: Now he commanded  
this, lest they should swear by Gods of a false  
Name. Again,  
Not to Swear, and not to require an Oath;  
comes to the same thing: For, how canst thou  
induce thy Brother unto that, which thou avoi-  
dest thy self; if so be that thou art a Lover of  
thy Brother, and not rather of Money?

Nor

*Nor by Heaven; for it is the Throne of God, &c.*  
 'Lest they should think, that he forbade to  
 'swear by God only, in saying, *By God*, he adds  
 'also other kind of Oaths, by which then the  
 'Jews did swear; for he that sweareth by these  
 'things, sweareth again by God, who fills these  
 'things, and rules them; for they have these  
 'things in Honour for him, and not for them-  
 'selves; for he saith by the Prophet, *Heaven is*  
 '*my Throne, and the Earth is my Foot-stool*; the Pro-  
 'phet manifesting by this, that God filleth all  
 'things: *Do not I fill Heaven and Earth?* David  
 'also saith, *The City of the Great King.*

*Neither by thy Head.*

'Therefore thou shouldst *not swear the meanest*  
 '*Oath*; I say, even by thy own Head, lest thou  
 'proceed to greater, or by any other manner;  
 'for the Creature is also the Possession of God;  
 'And again, the Oath is made by God, who  
 'hath it (the Creature) in his Power; for, al-  
 'though it (the Head) be made thine, yet it is  
 'not thy Work, which is manifest from this,  
 'That thou canst not make one Hair white or  
 'black.

*But let your Words be Yea, Yea; Nay, Nay, &c.*

'Let your Speech be when ye affirm, *Yea*; and  
 'when ye deny, *Nay*; and use only these for,  
 'or instead of Oaths to Confirmation, and no  
 'other then *Yea* and *Nay*; what is adjoynd be-  
 'sides these, he calleth an Oath.

Quest.

*Quest.* But if an Oath be of the Devil, how did  
the old Law permit it?

*They all agree  
in the Reason of suffering  
Oathes  
under the  
Law, viz. the  
Jews Weak-  
ness.*

*Ans.* ' Because the Sacrifices of Living  
' Creatures were also of Evil, and by the Deceit  
' of Idols; yet the Law permitted them, *because*  
' of the \* *Infirmity of the Hebrews*: For, whereas  
' they were Gluttons and Smell-Feasts, they lov'd  
' the Sacrifices of Idols; and whereas also they  
' were Unbelieving, they also loved an Oath:  
' And that they should not afterwards either sa-  
' crifice to Idols, or swear by Idols, the Law  
' permitted them to sacrifice and to swear; and if  
' there were any thing else of that kind, they  
' transferred all unto God. Now it was to come  
' to pass, that in process of time, he would cut  
' off these things also, by a more sublime Law  
' to be brought in; because it is good for Infants  
' to be suckled; but for men it is very unfit:  
' There we allow this to them that live after the  
' manner of Infants; but we withdraw or pro-  
' hibit them that are manly from it.

*Quest.* What then is to be done, if any require an  
Oath, yea, compel to Swear?

*Ans.* ' Let the Fear of God be more forcible  
' then this Compulsion or Necessity; and chuse  
' rather to suffer all things, *then to transgress the*  
' *Command*, sith in every Precept Force and Vio-  
' lent Danger will often meet with thee: And un-  
' less thou esteamest the Command of God every  
' where more forcible, all things will depart from  
' thee

'thee Void and Unperformed. In the following  
' Passages the Lord saith, *The Kingdom of Heaven*  
' *suffered Violence, and the Violent take it by Force.*

LXXIX. OECUMENIUS, a Famous Greek  
Writer, about *Ann. 1070.* writes on *Jam. 5. 12.*  
thus, 'But some will say, *If any be forced to swear,*  
' *what is to be done?* We say, that the Fear of God  
' shall be stronger then the Force of him that  
' compels. But some may doubt, *How it comes*  
' *to pass, that Grace doth not command this, as did the*  
' *Old Law, affording Praise to him that did swear by*  
' *the Name of the Lord?* We say, The old Law  
' leading the *Jews not to swear by Devils*, appointed  
' to swear by God, as it commanded them to sa-  
' crifice, drawing them from the Sacrifice of Idols  
' or Devils: But when it had sufficiently taught  
' them to have a Religious Respect to God, then  
' it rejected Sacrifices as unprofitable, seeking  
' not a Sacrifice by Beasts, but a Broaken Spirit;  
' that is, a sweet whole Burnt-Sacrifice, enflamed  
' by the Fire of Love. That ye fall not into Hy-  
' pocrisie (so some Copies have it; for the words  
' in *Greek* are something alike) *Hypocrisie* he  
' saith, or Condemnation, which follows them  
' that Swear without sparing, and through the  
' Custom of Oaths are carryed out to Forswear.  
' The Word *Hypocrisie* signifies thus much, that  
' which being one thing appears another; How  
' then falleth he into Hypocrisie that sweareth?  
' *Ans.* When he that is believed for the Oath's  
fake



' sake to be true, and yet Transgression following,  
 ' is declared to be a Liar, instead of a true Man,  
 ' not producing *Yea* in Certainty. He forbids  
 ' to swear by God, because of Perjury; but by  
 ' Heaven and other Oaths, that men should not  
 ' bring these things into the Honour of God; for  
 ' all that swear, do swear by the Greater.

LXXX. *ANSHELMUS*, Bishop of *Can-*  
*terbury*, about *Ann. 1090.* on that place of *Mat.*  
*5.* thus, pag. 38. *Thou shalt not Forswear, &c.*  
 ' *Moses* seeing that he could not take away Swear-  
 ' ing, takes away Perjury. And again, ' Because  
 ' men have in great Reverence those things by  
 ' which they swear, lest they should make the  
 ' Creatures Gods to themselves, he commands  
 ' them, *to render their Oaths to God, and not to swear*  
 ' *by Creatures:* But the Lord removes them more  
 ' perfectly from Perjury, *when he forbids them to*  
 ' *Swear at all.*

Vid. *Baron.* LXXXI. The Ancient *WALDENSES*  
*Anno 1310.* we have good Cause to say, *Deny'd the taking of*  
*Job. Walden* any Oath in what Sense the Primitive *Christians*  
*adv. Wicklif* and *Fathers* refused, and that was altogether: To  
 & *Waldensf.* be sure their Enemies charged them with it for  
*Reiner. Rub.* above Three Hundred Years; and we cannot  
*Capitan.* find, that they then deny'd the Charge: We  
*W Woodford.* suppose none will attempt to prove they did; for  
 they were well known in the World as to this  
 Particular.

LXXXII.

LXXXII. And Bp. *USHER* pleads for them, against the *Papists*, who were Swearers.

De Success.  
l. 6.

LXXXIII. Likewise, a People of *Albi* in *France*, Ann. 1176. held, 'It was Unlawful to Swear.

Bar. Anno  
1310. n. 3.

LXXXIV. The *Plowman's Complaint*, containing, as abundance of mournful Applications to God, so many notable and serious Reprehensions of the Lapse, Erroneous and Cruel Nature of Men; among others it hath this notable Passage to our Purpose, 'Lord, thou givest us a Command of Truth, in bidding us say, *Yea, Yea*, and Swear for Nothing; but, Lord, he (Pope) that calls himself *thy Vicar on Earth*, hath broken the Commandment, so makes a Law to compel men to Swear. Who was the Author of this, is not certainly known; but to be sure it was embraced of the *Wickliffians*, as worthy of their Patronage, and remembred and recorded by *John Fox*, as not unworthy to keep Company with *Protestant Martyrs*.

y. Fox Mart.  
v. 1. p. 527.

Men honoured by Protestants.

LXXXV. *JOHN WICKLIFF*, our Country-man, and in his time *Divinity Professor* of *Oxford* (Famous for his Learning and Godly Courage in oppugning the Doctrines and Practices of *Rome*, in the time of *Edward the third*, and *Richard the second*, about the year 1370.)

y. Fox Mart.  
v. 1. p. 554.  
to 558.

was

300  
was accused among other things, for maintaining,  
that all Oaths, which be made for any Contract or Civil  
Bargain betwixt man and man, are Unlawful.

L X X X V I. We will bring in here a  
Passage out of the *Plowman's Tale*, as it lyes in  
Geffrey CHAUCER's Works, not impertinent  
to our Purpose; whose Learning, Honour  
and Wit was great in the time he lived; which  
was about 1360. *John Wickliff's* Contemporary.

*Geff. Chaucer.*  
*Works, fol.*  
*36.*

' These Wollen make men to Swear;  
' against Christ's Commandment;  
' And Christ's Members all to tear,  
' on rood as he were new yrent:  
' Such Laws they maken by common Assent,  
' each one it throweth as a Ball;  
' Thus the Poor be full thent;  
' but ever Falshood foul it befall.

He hath Expressions not less disliking Oaths  
in his *Parson's Tales*, where he makes the Parson  
to say, 'After those, then cometh Swearing,  
' expressly against the Commandment of God, and our  
' Lord Jesus Christ, who saith by St. Matthew's  
' words, *Ne shall ye not Swear in all manner, or on*  
' no Account.

*J. Fox Mart.*  
*v. 1. p. 614,*  
*618.*

L X X X V I I. WILLIAM SWINDERBY,  
Priest, and a Zealous Follower of *John Wickliff*,  
also lived in the time of *Richard the second*, as  
appears by his Appeal to that King, from the  
Unjust

Unjust Sentence of the Bishop of *Hartford*, in which, to this part of the Charge exhibited (*That no man ought to swear for any thing, but simply, without an Oath, to Affirm or Deny*) he answers thus, 'Whereas Christ's Law forbids Swearing, the Pope's Law justifieth Swearing, and compels men thereunto: Methinks (saith he) there is no need to Comfort or Encourage the People in Swearing.

LXXXVIII. *WALTER BRUTE*, also an early Dissenter from the *Roman Church*, and Intimate of *William Swinbery*, being charged, among other things, with saying, *That it is not Lawful for Christians, for any Cause to swear by the Creator, neither by the Creature*, thus answer'd for himself, and indeed, it comprehends much of our Belief in this Matter: 'As concerning *Oaths*, I believe 'and obey the Doctrine of Almighty God, and 'my Master, *Jesus Christ*, which teacheth, That 'Christian-men in Affirmation of a Truth should 'pass the Righteousness of the *Scribes and Pharisees*, the old Testament, or else he excludes 'them from the Kingdom of God: For Christ 'sayes, *Unless your Righteousness exceed the Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* And as concerning *Oaths*, Christ saith, *It hath been said by them of old time, thou shalt not Forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord those things that thou knowest: But I say unto you, Thou shalt not swear at*

*J. Fox Mart.*  
v. 1. p. 62,  
359.

Q 2

all,

all, neither by Heaven, nor yet by the Earth, &c. but  
 let your Communication be Yea, Yea, and Nay, Nay;  
 for, whatsoever shall be more then this, proceedeth of  
 Evil: Therefore, as the Perfection of the an-  
 cient Men of the Old Testament was, Not to  
 Forswear themselves; so the Perfection of Chri-  
 stian Men is, Not to Swear at all, because we are  
 so commanded of Christ, whose Command-  
 ments must in no Case be broaken. Thus much  
 of W. Brute.

J. Fox Mart.  
 v. 1. p. 687.

LXXXIX. John Purrey, John Edward, John  
 Becket, John Clements, Richard Herbert and Emmot  
 Willie, with many more in the time of Henry the  
 fourth, through Fears and Hopes deserted their  
 Profession, and revolted (as John Fox tells us)  
 from their Faith, which was the Religion then

\* If they profess of those called Wickliffians or Lollards (the  
 could not, it True, Poor, Persecuted Christians of that time)  
 was then And of the Fifteen Articles, by them abjured,  
 held none this was one; Item, That neither the \* Pope,  
 could; so nor the Prelate, neither any Ordinary can compel any  
 that then it man to Swear by any Creature of God; or by the Bible-  
 was denying all Tenders, Book.

Ibid. p. 701,  
 702.

XC. WILLIAM THORPE; whom John  
 Fox calls, The Constant and Blessed Servant of God,  
 and good Man and Servant of Christ, &c. refused  
 to swear upon a Bible, when the Arch-Bishop ten-  
 dered the Oath to him; for, he thought it Not  
 Lawful to take or give an Oath thereon, 'Because

'a Book is nothing else (sayes he) but divers  
 'Creatures, of which it is made; and such Swen-  
 'ring is ever Unlawful, as witnesseth *Chrysostom*  
 'plainly, *blaming them greatly, that bring out a Book*  
 'to swear upon; charging *Clarks, that in no wise they*  
 'constrain any Body to swear well, when that thing is  
 'sooth (or true) that they swear for. And also,  
 'full many Men and Women now say, That it is  
 'well done to swear by God, and by our Lady, and by  
 'other Saints, to have them in mind; others say,  
 'That they may not swear, when they may otherwise  
 'be believed: But since all these Sayings are Ex-  
 'cuses, and Sin, methinks, Sir (saith he) that  
 'this Sense of *Chrysostom* may be alledged well a-  
 'gainst all such Swearers.

X C I. ELIZABETH YOUNG, who was brought to Examination in the Marian-days, be-  
 fore the Catholick Inquisitors of Heretical Pravity, as  
 they then called themselves, and commanded to  
 Swear, this Language was used to her.

J. Fox Mart.  
 v.3. p.910,  
 911.

Dr. Martin, 'Thou shalt be racked Inch-meal,  
 'thou Trayterly Whore and Heretick; but thou  
 'shalt swear before a Judge before thou go.

Eliz. Young, 'Sir, I understand not what an Oath  
 'is, and therefore I will take no such thing upon me.

Dr. Martin, 'She refuseth to swear upon the  
 'four Evangelists before a Judge; for, I my self  
 'and Mr. Hussy, have had her before us Four  
 'Times, but we cannot bring her to swear.

Then

Then said the Bishop, 'Why wilt thou not  
'I swear before a Judge, &c ?

Eliz. Young, 'My Lord, I will not swear, that  
'this Hand is mine.

'No, said the Bishop; and why ?

Eliz. Young, 'Christ saith, That whatsoever  
'is more then Yea, Yea; or Nay, Nay, it cometh of  
'Evil.

Then Dr. Cook brought her to a Book, com-  
manding her to lay her Hand thereon.

Eliz. Young, 'No, my Lord, I will Not Swear.  
And so she persisted, till God delivered her out of their  
Hands.

*John Huss, Jerom of Prague, Walter Brute, William Swinaderby, William Sawtry, William White, William Thorpe, &c. are recorded by those of other Nations, both High and Low Dutch, to have refused all Swearing, as well by God, as by Creatures, in any Case, private or publick. Though such as admit of Oaths in some Cases, labour, as John Fox in England, and the Calvinists abroad, to eclipse and mutilate their Testimony; as if they were one while only against Book-Swearing, as being a Creature; another while, only against Swearing in Private Cases; another while, as J. Fox relates in John Burrell, That it is not lawful to swear, but in Case of Life and Death, &c. But most evident it is, that they were against All Swearing, or Swearing at all; else, why should they so frequently alledge Chrysostom, who, though he accounted swearing by Creatures a more execrable Sin, then to swear by God; yet constantly counted Swearing at all, a Sin in Christians, as cleaving to that which Christ had abrogated, being only permitted to the Jews, for the Hardness and*



and Blindness of their Hearts, their Unbelief and Propensity to follow the Course of the *Heathens*, and swear by their Gods. Let it not be forgotten, that *Chrysostom* not only inveighs against them that bring forth the Book to swear by, because it is a Creature; but that he also upbraided them with Impudence and Audaciousness, that dare make use of that Law to administer an Oath by, *that so strictly forbids an Oath.*

Ridiculous it is, to make them deny Swearing only in private Cases, and to be ready to swear in Case of Life and Death: For where is there any Shadow of such a Law? And how should those Honest Men invent one? Christ's Law we read *Mat. 5.* The Doctors, *Chrysostom* and *Jerom's* Judgment, whom they had mostly in their Mouths, we have repeated here at large, in which is not the least Restriction. These Good Men then must needs be understood to take the Law of Christ either to have forbidden Swearing in any Case, and then not to swear in Case of Life; or not to forbid Swearing at all, and then they not only might swear to save their Lives, but Liberties and Estates, and ought so to do. But we hope there can be no room left for this Objection.

**XCII.** The *LOLLARDS* of *Kille* in *Scot.* *Spotsf. Hist.* *land* were against all Swearing, as both *Spotswood* in pag. 61. his *Chronicle* doth relate, and the Book called, *The History of the Reformation of the Kirk of Scotland.*

**XCIII.** *MICHAEL SADLER* (an Eminent Man, call'd a *Lord*) was Cruelly Tortur'd and put to death by some *Papists* under the Emperor of *Germany*, whose Brethren were also Executed

*W.C. Albrid*  
p. 193, 194.  
195.

ecuted with the Sword, and his Wife and Sisters Drowned, *Ann. 1527.* One Article alledged against him was, that he had said, *That men should not Swear to, or before the Magistrate.*

*Morl. Hist.*  
p. 217, 218.

**X C I V.** The **CHRISTIAN-PROTESTANTS** in the Valley of *Piedmont*, who were Cruelly Tortured to Death by the *Papists*, about *Ann. 1655.* One Article alledged against them was, *That they believed it was not lawful to Swear anything, be it True or False.*

*J. Fox Mart.*  
v. 2. p. 420.

**X C V.** **GERARD SAGARELD** of *Parma*, and his Followers, *Denied all Oaths and Vows.* So did several in *Germany*, mention'd by *B. Usher*, in his Book *De Successione*: 'In *Germany*, Jury and 'Swearing is well excluded, and need not much 'to be required.

*Comm. on*  
*Mat. 5.*

**X C V I.** **ERASMUS**, 'Now ye shall 'hear another thing. Commandment was given 'unto your Elders, none otherwise; but if they 'had made an Oath, they should perform it, and 'not be Forsworn; for now they are bound to 'God, and not to man only: Wherefore among 'the *Jews* only Perjury is punishable; but he that 'deceives his Neighbour without any Oath made; 'he goes unpunished; but yet the Law of the 'Gospel condemneth him; the which, that ye 'may be the more remote from Perjury, doth ut-  
'terly

'terly condemn all manner of Oaths; *that it is not*  
 'lawful to Swear, neither by God, nor by those things  
 'which seem to the Common Sort to be things of less  
 'Religion, that is, Neither by Heaven, because it is  
 'the Seat of God; nor by the Earth, because it is his  
 'Foot-stool; nor by Jerusalem, because it is the City  
 'of the Great King, that is to say, of him that  
 'hath made all things: Neither as the Heathen  
 'swear, by the Head of another Man, whereof  
 'thou hast no Authority; but it is consecrate to  
 'God, that hath made all things as he would;  
 'for thou canst not make one White Hair Black,  
 'nor the contrary: And because all things are  
 'consecrate to God, the Maker, thou oughtest  
 'to be fearful to swear by any thing. And what  
 'needeth any Oath among them; *where no man,*  
 'because of their Simplicity, can distrust; nor no  
 'man can desire to deceive, though they might  
 'do it? Such is their Sincerity and Perfectness,  
 'specially in those things of the which they de-  
 'clare themselves to be Despisers. Therefore  
 'among you, *plain and simple Speech ought to be*  
 'more holy and more sure than the devout and solemn  
 'Oath among the Jews: For, among you, whose  
 'Hearts and Mouths ought to agree, there is no  
 'other use of Speech, but to express your  
 'Minds each to other. In your Bargains ye  
 'need no Oath, ye need no Execration, or Cur-  
 'sing, or such like, to bind the Promiser, or to  
 'assure him to whom the Promise is made: Two  
 'Words be sufficient, *Nay and Yea*, whereby  
 'thou

'thou deniest that which thou dost not promise,  
 'and whereby thou dost perform that which thou  
 'didst promise by plain Word, that thou wouldst  
 'do: For, there is no man less bound by his  
 'simple and bare Word, then the Jew Swearing  
 'by all holy Things; and he whom thou makest  
 'thy Promise unto, doth trust thee as much as  
 'if thou hadst made a solemn Oath. *If there be*

*Erasm. here*  
 plainly for-  
 biddeth all  
 Swearing on  
 any account.

'any \* more besides these, it must needs come of Evil  
 'and Sin: For, he that sweareth, either be thinketh  
 'Evil of him to whom he sweareth, or else, be that  
 'requireth the Oath, doth distrust: But none of these  
 'ought to be in you, whom I would have perfect in all  
 'Points. Therefore, when I utterly forbid Swear-  
 'ing, I do not abolish the Law which doth pro-  
 'hibit Perjury; but I make the Law more full, and  
 'I with-draw men further from that, which the Law  
 'doth punish.

Comm. on  
 Jam. 5.

'Let your Mind be pure and plain, and let  
 'your Heart and your Mouth go both together:  
 'Let no man with feign'd words deceive his Neigh-  
 'bour. But especially, my Brethren, Swear Not, lest by  
 'little and little you accustom your selves to For-  
 'swear. Among Jews and Heathens, for Fide-  
 'lity's sake, there is an Oath put; But among  
 'Christians, which ought neither to distrust any man,  
 'nor to deceive, it is a Vain Thing to Swear. Who-  
 'soever is accustomed to Swear, is Cousenger-  
 'man to the Peril of Forswearing. Be you afraid,  
 'not only to Swear by God in humane Affairs,  
 'and in light Matters, but also abstain from all kind  
 'of

of Swearing, that you Swear neither by Heaven, nei-  
 ther by Earth, or any other thing, that the Common  
 People esteem for \* Holy and Religious. Whoso- Then not by  
 ever dare be bold to Lye without Swearing, he God; for the  
 dare do the same also when he Swareth, if he common pe-  
 list. To be brief: He that is a good man, will be- ople esteem-  
 lieve a man without Swearing; and he that is naught, med him sa-  
 will not trust a man though he Swear: But among cred.  
 you that are furnished with Evangelical Plain-  
 ness, there is neither place to distrust, nor to  
 imagine Deceit: But let your Plain Communica-  
 tion be regarded for no less True and Steadfast, then  
 any manner of Oath of the Jews or Pagans, how holy  
 soever it be. As often as you confirm any thing, con-  
 firm it with all your Heart; and perform indeed the  
 thing that you speak: As oft as you deny any thing,  
 deny it with your whole Heart; neither let any thing  
 else be in your Heart then your Mouth speaketh, that  
 there be no Counterfeiting in you, seeing you are Dis-  
 ciples of the Truth.

Thus far, we hope, is put altogether out of Questi-  
 on, Whether many Learned and Christian Men have not  
 flatly denyed the Use of Oaths to True Christians: And  
 though we need not the Contribution that is afforded us by  
 several School and other Roman Doctors, yet to evidencce  
 a kind of Succession, and Universality of Testimony to  
 this Doctrine, we think it not improper to mention some  
 of them.

*The Judgment of Shoolmen and others, in this Point.*

Gloss on XCVII. *T. A QUINAS, Non jurare omnino,*  
*Mat. 5. P. &c. Not to swear at all, &c. 'The Lord had*  
 22. *taught before, Wrong is not to be done to our Neigh-*  
*'bour, as in forbidding Anger with Murder, Lust,*  
*'Adultery, putting away of one's Wife, and*  
*'now he teacheth consequently, that we must*  
*'abstain from the wronging of God, when he*  
*'doth not forbid only Forswearing, as Evil, but*  
*'also an Oath, as the Occasion of Evil, from*  
*'whence he saith, hear thou again, For it was said*  
*'of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself: and*  
*'lest that they might make to themselves the*  
*'Creatures Gods, he commandeth, to render*  
*'the Oaths to God, and not to swear by the Creatures,*  
*'from whence it follows, Render to God, &c. that*  
*'is, If one shall happen to swear by the Creator,*  
*'not by the Creature, whence he saith in Deute-*  
*'ronomy, Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and by his*  
*'Name shalt swear, and this was allowed by the*  
*'Law, as to Children, that as they did offer Sa-*  
*'crifice to Idols, they should not offer them to*  
*'Idols, so they were permitted to swear by God,*  
*'not that they might do this rightly, but that it*  
*'might be better to give this to God, than to*  
*'Devils. Chrysostom upon Matthew, For no man*  
*'swareth frequently that sometimes may not forswear,*  
*'as he that makes it a Custom to speak many things,*  
*'sometimes he speaks unfit things. Augustine against*  
*'Faustus, The Lord was more willing that we not*  
 'Swearing

Swearing might come short of the Truth, then Swearing the Truth, to come nearer to Perjury: Whence it follows, I say unto you, Swear not at all. Augustine on the Words of the Lord in the Mountain, in which he condemns the Righteousness of the Pharisees, which is, Not to Forswear, For he cannot Forswear, that doth not Swear.

XCVIII. *CASFETAN*, Again, Ye have heard] On *Mat. 5.*  
 He perfects another Precept of the Old Law *fol. 18.*  
 concerning Perjury (because it was said to them of old time, *Thou shalt not Forswear*) *Exod. 20.*  
*Thou shalt not take the Name of thy God in vain:*  
*And Levit. 19. Thou shalt not Forswear in the*  
*Name of the Lord; but shalt render to the Lord thy*  
*Oaths.* The first part of this Precept (namely, *Thou shalt not Forswear*) is negative, forbidding Evil in its kind; for Perjury is Evil of it self, therefore by no Reason it can be excused. But the second part (namely, *Thou shalt render to the Lord thy Oaths*) is affirmative, and doth not signifie to fulfil the Oaths which thou hast promised (as it appears) and thereupon nothing follows of fulfilling of Promises) but it signifies, that the Oaths to God are to be rendred; that is, that Swearing must be by the Lord, not by the Creatures: For these words are not in the Law, but the Sense of them is, *Deut. 6.*  
*Thou shalt swear by the Name of the Lord thy God:*  
 Where Swearing is not commanded, but is but regulated, that it should be by the Name of  
 God.



24 ' God, and not by the Name of the Creatures :  
 ' For, the Law commandeth, that this Act of  
 ' Religion, which is, *to swear*, should be exhibi-  
 ' ted to God, and to no Creatures or Idols whar-  
 ' soever. *But I say unto you*] He perfecteth both  
 ' the Precepts, adjoyning two Precepts; the  
 ' one negative, the other affirmative (*Not to*  
 ' *swear at all*) Lo a negative Precept, wherein two  
 ' things are contained, that is, *Not to Swear*, and *Not*  
 ' *at all*; he forbids us to *swear at all*, by all means, as  
 ' well in expressing God, as not in expressing God;  
 ' suppose by Heaven and Earth, and by the rest of  
 ' the Creatures: And in this he perfects the Precept  
 ' concerniing not Forswearing, not only by ta-  
 ' king away an Oath, but the Occasion of For-  
 ' swearing; for, 'tis impossible to incur For-  
 ' swearing without an Oath: and also, the Pre-  
 ' cept of performing the Oath to God, by taking  
 ' away the Care of Performing; for where no-  
 ' thing is sworn, there is no need of any Care  
 ' of performing the Oath to God.

Comm. on  
 Mat. 5.

C. V. ALPHONSUS de Avendano, 'It's to  
 ' be noted out of *Cajetan*, that in this the Lord  
 ' perfected the Command of not Forswearing, by  
 ' taking away not only Forswearing, but the  
 ' Occasion of not Forswearing; because, with-  
 ' out an Oath it is impossible to incur Perjury.  
 ' An Oath was not necessary by the first Intenti-  
 ' on of Nature; for if men had continued in the  
 ' Truth, they had not lyed; and because Christ  
 ' came, that he might bring back men to this first  
 ' In-

‘ Innocency, an Oath was not necessary, suppose  
‘ that men ought to return unto it, then to  
‘ men that live according to the Simplicity of the  
‘ Gospel, an Oath is not necessary, and therefore  
‘ not Good.

Reasons for avoiding Oaths, from the same Author.

‘ 1<sup>st</sup>, Lest by Swearing they fall into Perjury,  
‘ for which Cause Swearing is of an ill Report  
‘ amongst the Saints, as in *Ambrose, Psalm 18.*

‘ 2<sup>dly</sup>, For Reverence of the Name of God.

‘ 3<sup>dly</sup>, For the mutual Confidence which one  
‘ Christian should have of another, which ought  
‘ to be so great, that every one should be sure, and  
‘ not possible to be deceived in the least thing, al-  
‘ though he should speak in a single Assertion;  
‘ and so the Authority of the Saints, which do  
‘ seem to forbid all Oaths to Christians, and that  
‘ the Truth of the Gospel receives no Oath, as  
‘ good and desirable of it self; seeing every  
‘ one is of Evil.

‘ Lastly, Out of *Cajetan*, The Lord perfecteth  
‘ this Precept of not Forswearing, by taking away  
‘ not only Perjury, but the Occasion of it, and  
‘ taking away the Care: For, where there is  
‘ no Swearing, there is no need of Care of Ren-  
‘ dering.

‘ Oh! how Sincere and True would the Lord  
‘ make his Christians, that all Affirmations should  
‘ be included in Three Letters only, all Denials  
‘ in other Three, that the Truth should be so fa-  
‘ miliar to us, as to be included in the Com-  
‘ pendium of Three Letters ?

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 C. FRANCISCUS de MENDOCA, Olysi-  
 penfis, Dr. Theol. in Eburenf. Academia, Sacr.  
 On 1 King. 12. n. 3. II. lit. Interpres, in 4. lib. Reg. Tom. 3. Speak,  
 12. n. 3. II. 'faith he, of me, &c. In the Hebrew it is נִדַּב  
 'i. e. testife, from the verb נִדַּב, which not  
 'only fignifieth to *ſpeak*, but alfo to *bear Testimony*,  
 'as it is to be ſeen Ex. 20. n. 14. Deut. 19. n. 15.  
 'Job 16. n. 9. et paſſim alibi, and many other pla-  
 'ces, as if there were no Difference with the  
 'Hebrews of *ſpeaking* and *teſtifying*, nor without  
 'Cause; for there ought to be ſo much Veracity  
 'of Good Men, that their Simple Speech may  
 'be accounted ſworn, and their private Confe-  
 'rence be accounted a publick Testimony, which  
 'was to be accounted the Fidelity of Cato, who was  
 'believed in a Court-Caſe even Unſworn; which  
 'alſo S. Jerome, in his Epistle to Celantia, incul-  
 'cates; Let there be, ſaith he, ſo much Love of Truth  
 'in thee, that whatſoever thou ſayeſt, thou mayſt think to  
 'be ſworn. The ſame Jerome to that of Mat. 5.  
 'Swear not, &c. The Gospel-Truth, ſaith he, doth  
 'not receive an Oath, ſith every Faithful Speech is for  
 'an Oath. To which Opinion is agreeable the  
 'Doctrine of Philo Alex. in his Book of the De-  
 'calogue, It will be moſt profitable, ſaith he, and  
 'moſt agreeable to the rational Nature, to abſtain Al-  
 'together from Swearing; and be ſo accuſtom'd to Truth,  
 'that one's ſingle Word may have the Force of an Oath.  
 'The like relateth Joſephus, in the ſecond Book  
 'of the Jewiſh War, cap. 7. De his Eſſeni, moſt  
 ſincere

' sincere Worshippers of Truth (*veracitibus*).  
 ' The Hebrew Elders also, when they would make  
 ' their Innocency about the man kill'd by an  
 ' Uncertain Author, testified with an Oath, as  
 ' the Rabbins, Solomon and Moses in *Lyran*, affirm,  
 ' *Deut. 21*. Nevertheless, they are brought in  
 ' by the Scripture, asseverating it only with simple  
 ' Speech; And they shall say, saith he, *Our*  
 ' *Hands have not shed this Blood, nor our Eyes seen it.*  
 ' Because the simple and Naked Speech of a  
 ' Wise Man, is equivalent to an Oath; which  
 ' *St. Bernard* vehemently commendeth in *Comite*  
 ' *Theobaldo*, in *Epist. 38*. to the same, And indeed,  
 ' saith he, in other Princes, if at any time we take a  
 ' Word of Lightness or Falseness, we account it neither  
 ' new nor wonderful: But with *Count Theobald*, we  
 ' do not at all patiently hear *Tea & Nay*, to whom,  
 ' as it is said, *Simply to speak, is to Swear*; and  
 ' a light Lye is accounted a heavy Perjury; for  
 ' among very many Ensigns of Virtue, which do  
 ' very much ennoble your Dignity, and make  
 ' your Name Renowned and Famous throughout  
 ' the World, the Constancy of Truth is especially  
 ' praised in you. 3. Certainly God himself hath  
 ' (*tantundem*) so much to speak nakedly, and to swear  
 ' by himself holily: For that he promised with an  
 ' Oath an Offspring to *David*, which should sit  
 ' on his Throne, is read no where in the Scripture;  
 ' And yet *Abner*, 2 *King. 3. n. 9*. acknowledges an  
 ' Offspring sworn to *David*, The Lord do so to *Ab-*  
 ' *ner*, saith he, and add these things to him, unless  
 ' as the Lord hath sworn to *David*, so I do with him.

' And in *Psalm 88*. God himself saith, *Once have*  
 ' *I sworn in my Holiness, if I Lye to David, &c.*  
 ' Also the Land of *Canaan* is no where found, in  
 ' the holy Scriptures promised to the ancient Fa-  
 ' thers with an Oath, but God promised it sim-  
 ' ply to *Abraham*, *Gen. 12, 13, & 17.* to *Isaac*, *Gen.*  
 ' *26.* to *Jacob*, *Gen. 28.* Yet *Moses*, in *Deut. 1.*  
 ' Possess, saith he, the Land, for which the Lord swore  
 ' to your Fathers. *Philo Alex.* in the Book of *Abra-*  
 ' *ham*, at the end looses the Knot notably; That  
 ' therefore the simple Promise of God in those places  
 ' is called an Oath, because it hath the Force of an  
 ' Oath.

On *Mat. 5.*  
 P. 23, 24.

CI. *JACOBUS FABER*, ' It is the part of  
 ' a Spiritual Man, not only Not to Swear in a  
 ' Vain Thing, but also not in any Serious thing;  
 ' for, you which are such, are true: Unto true  
 ' men it's sufficient that a true man gain Belief, if  
 ' he say, that the Lord hath commanded *Yea, Yea,*  
 ' in Affirming; *Nay, Nay,* in Denying: But if  
 ' with incredulous and Evil men a Speech also be  
 ' had concerning a serious and necessary Matter,  
 ' why shall one Swear for their Badness, that he  
 ' may gain Belief with them? Who ever spake  
 ' more seriously then our Saviour? Who more  
 ' necessary things? Yet he never used other  
 ' Speech then that, *Verely, verely, I say unto you,*  
 ' or some other such like, which was a true Form  
 ' or Manner to them, that swore not. Therefore  
 ' that now some Swear, to gain Belief concerning  
 ' some profitable and necessary things, which  
 ' they

' they think is to be given rather to the Oath  
 ' then to the Person: Perhaps also there is a  
 ' Danger when an Oath is required in Judgment,  
 ' lest he that exacteth it, sin; For if it be manifest,  
 ' that he that is called into Judgment be verely  
 ' good and true, it is enough to hear of him *Yea*  
 ' or *Nay*; but if that be not evident, or that it  
 ' be evident, that he is bad, perhaps that's re-  
 ' quired of him which ought not to be required.  
 ' What then? It is lawful to Adjure: For the  
 ' Lord made Answer to an Adjuration, but he did  
 ' not Swear; and Adjurations are found in the  
 ' New Law: But if any one being Adjured of  
 ' another, speak the Truth, by answering *Yea*  
 ' or *Nay*, or by declaring the thing requir'd, neither  
 ' the one nor the other offendeth; but if he speak  
 ' a Falsity, he offends, and incurs the Offence of  
 ' a False Testimony, but perchance he sinneth  
 ' less then if by Swearing he had also fallen into  
 ' the Guilt of Perjury: For, as he that (being  
 ' adjured) answereth in Truth, doth not Swear;  
 ' so he that answereth in Falseness, doth not For-  
 ' swear, but he is a False Witness: but he also  
 ' who hath adjured, is altogether guiltless; for,  
 ' there is no doubt but he hath required that  
 ' which was lawful to require. And although  
 ' its not my Purpose to contradict the Ordinances  
 ' of Judgments, yet I may think this to be more  
 ' *Christian*, both *not to Swear at all*, neither to  
 ' *Compel to Swear*, to be more Spiritual: But yet,  
 ' if the Badness of men would permit it, although  
 S 2 ' you

Roe

‘you would have this Sentence of the Lord concerning *not Swearing*, to be applyed to the Believers common and daily Custom of speaking (for he speaks to his Disciples) which is very true, especially if the old Law, which the Lord declares, *Thou shalt not Forswear, but shalt render to the Lord thine Oaths*, was given concerning common and daily Speech; but afterwards the Lord ameneth another thing, which was written in the Old Law, that the Law might be perfect, and that he might shew how he hath fulfilled it; and it may be fulfilled of others, as *Matthew* shews.

De quaest.  
jur. Christ.  
p. 306.

C I I. *SHAREZ*: He affirmeth, Christ did not Swear, because that which he could not lawfully do, he could not simply do; but he could not lawfully swear, therefore he could not at all: But that he never swore, is proved, because that he himself commanded or counselled, *Not to swear at all*, but simply to speak, *Yea, it is; Nay, it is not, &c.* therefore ought to go before the Example. It is spoken of him only sometimes that he said *Amen*, or *Truly* or *Verily*, which we have before shewed to be no Participle of Swearing.

‘It’s not only forbidden in the New, but also in the Old Testaments, *Not to Swear*, as *Hof. 4. Zach. 5.* quoteth *Tertullian*, lib. *de Idololat.* cap. 11. saying, *I am silent about Perjury, seeing that indeed it is not lawful to Swear.*

pag. 227.

‘And those very words of Christ, *Swear not at*  
‘*a7*



all, signifie this (seeing he subjoyns, *Neither by Heaven, &c.*) as if he had said, not only greater Oaths, but also these, which seem less, you are to take heed of, and it is apparent from the Reason which he adjoyns, saying, *Neither by Heaven*: If therefore Christ forbiddeth to swear by Heaven, because God dwells therein, much more he forbiddeth to swear by God, &c. Now he forbiddeth all manner of Swearing by the Creatures, and every Oath by God himself, *Hom. 18. in Cant.* as *Greg. Nyssen* rightly argues, and Christ himself hath plainly so declared, *Mat. 23.*

Lastly, The following Words of Christ are opposit, *Let your Word be Yea and Nay*; for, by them he declareth, that he before forbade the Addition of any Oath. 2dly, *Jerome* answers, *Swearing was permitted to the Jews, as to Children; but Evangelical Verity receives not Swearing, seeing every Faithful Word is for an Oath.* The same Doctrine and Exposition doth *Chrysostom* follow. *Theophylact*, after Christ, *It is an Evil to Swear, as to be Circumcised, and in brief, whatsoever is Jewish.* *Beda*, also *Castro* and *Druthmarus* confess, and *Bernard* himself denyes not, that it is the Counsel of Christ, *not to Swear.* And Precepts are not contray to Countels.

Libr. 1. cap. 14. p. 282. *Whether an Oath be an elicit Act of Religion as Virtue?*

There may be a Reason of Doubting, because every Act of Religion is Principally intended for the Worship of God: But an Oath  
is

is not made primarily, and of it self (*per se*) for the  
 Worship of God ; but for confirming, &c. as  
*Heb. 6.* From whence it seems plainly to follow,  
 That an *Oath* is not an *Act* of Religion.

It may be declared by Reason ; because,  
 1<sup>st</sup>, It is impossible that man can bring God  
 for a Witness, although he would never so fain :  
 Therefore the Name of God is taken in vain,  
 as often as it is taken to swear ; Therefore it is  
 Evil in it self (*per se*.)

2<sup>dly</sup>, Grant this were possible, to bring God  
 for a Witness ; it seems disorderly to bring the  
 Person of God to confirm men's Businessses,  
 Covenants, or Words, because it is disorderly to  
 order things of an higher Order to those that are  
 inferiour : Much more is it disorderly, to mix  
 the sacred Authority of God to the prophane  
 (or common) Words, and Businessses of Men.

3<sup>dly</sup>, Though in some Case an Oath might  
 be used without Inconvenience, yet it is so  
 exposed to Dangers, that it can scarce be  
 done without Crime : But in the Law of Grace,  
 because of the Perfection of it, not only Sins  
 are to be forbid, but also those things which do  
 morally and nearest entangle into Sin : For he  
 that loveth Danger, shall perish in it. He  
 quotes *Clemens Romanus*, lib. 6. *Constitut. Apost.*  
 as before ; Our Master commanded, that we should  
 not Swear, no, not by the true God ; that our Word should  
 be counted more firm and credible then an Oath it self.  
 He quotes also *Greg. Nazianzen*, as before, upon  
 these

these words, *But I say unto you, &c.*] *He forbiddeth all manner of Swearing by the Creatures, even with Respect to God:* Hence it follows from the forcibler, as I said, that he forbid all Swearing by God himself, as *Gregory Nazianzen* rightly argues, as before, on *Cant. Homil. 18.* And Christ himself plainly so declared, *Mat. 23.* *He that Sweareth by Heaven, Sweareth by the Throne of God, &c.*

‘*Lastly,* The words withstand, which Christ ‘subjoyns, *Let your Word be, &c.*] For, by them ‘he declares, that he had before forbidden the ‘adding of any Oath: Therefore *Jerome* answered, *That Oaths, &c. were permitted to the Jews,* ‘*as to Children.*

He uses many other Arguments, and quotes many Authors, as may be seen at large in his Book concerning *Swearing.*

CIII. *JO. MAJOR HADINGTONIANI*, on *Mat. 5.* *Not to Swear at all:* ‘That Precept was given to the Disciples (the Basis) of the ‘first Church.

CIV. *JOAC. CAMER.* and *P. LOSELER VILLERIUS*’s Marginal Note upon *Mat. 5. 37.* ‘Whatsoever you vouch, vouch it *barely*; and ‘whatsoever you deny, deny it *barely*, without ‘any more words.

CV. *Bible*, imprinted *An. 1559.* in Quarto. *What is more is of Evil*] Marginal Note, ‘*From* ‘*an evil Conscience, or from the Devil.* C VI.

CVI. MARLORAT on *Mat. 5.* faith, 'Some men, *not bad*, hold against Swearing.

*Maldonat* on *Mat. 5.* reckons up several against Swearing.

CVII. PETER CHARRON, Doctor of Law in *Paris*, in his Book of Wisdom, chap. 37. 'An Oath, what is it, but a Symptom and shameful Mark of Distrust, Infidelity, Ignorance, Humane Infirmary, *both in him that Requires it, that Gives it, that Ordains it* (alluding to Christ's Words, faith he) *Quod amplius est a malo;* 'What is more, is from the Devil.

CVIII. BEZA, on *James 5. 12.* 'That which you have to say or affirm, speak or affirm it *simply*, and *without an Oath*; and that you have to deny, deny it *simply* and *flatly*.

CIX. *Folio Bible*, printed *Ann. 1578.* Marginal Note on *Mat. 5. 34.* *Swear not at all,* 'Let Simplicity and Truth be your Words, and then you shall not be so light, and ready to Swear.

Comm. on  
1 *Tim. 1.* pag.  
210.

CX. LODOVICUS SOTO Major, 'In the Gospel, this Particle (*Amen*) is often used by Christ our Lord, *confirming* his Words by it, as *Hierem* also noteth; yet it's not to be thought (that none be

' be deceived ) that Christ our Lord *swore*, or  
 ' would have to *Swear*, as often as he useth this  
 ' Word or Form of Confirming; but rather so to  
 ' have been willing, more to *Confirm*, and *Perswade*,  
 ' and *Commend* those Things which he taught, and  
 ' especially, by *Reiterating* or *Repeating* this Word,  
 ' as he often useth; for neither in this doubling of  
 ' the Word, for nought that Christ our Lord some-  
 ' times useth it in the Gospel, but rather it hath a  
 ' great *Emphasis* & *Encrease*, that is, great *Moment*  
 ' and *Weight* to *perswade* and gain *Belief*, as *Augu-*  
 ' *stine* rightly teacheth and explaineth in his 41.  
 ' *Treat* upon the Gospel of *John*, expounding those  
 ' Words of Christ, saying, *Amen*, or *verely*, *verely*,  
 ' *I say to you*, *He that doth Sin; is the Servant of Sin*:  
 ' although therefore that it be not a *Swearing*, yet it  
 ' is a certain greater *Confirmation* and *Asseveration*  
 ' of those Things which are spoken; yet never-  
 ' theless it is not *Swearing*; for otherwise, is it  
 ' likely that Christ the Lord, who himself *dehort*s  
 ' others from *Swearing* at all. for *Danger* of *For-*  
 ' *swearing*, should himself *Swear* so often? for he  
 ' not only *forbad* his to *Swear*, *Mat. 5.* but also at  
 ' the same Time, and that very wholly, that  
 ' they should only use in their Speech a simple *As-*  
 ' *firmation* and *Denyal*, without any *Oath*, saying,  
 ' *Swear NOT at all, &c.* for this much more becomes  
 ' the *Simplicity*, *Sincerity*, *Piety* and *Modesty* of *Chri-*  
 ' *stians*; for nothing is more Simple, Brief and  
 ' *Effectual* to *perswade* (the *Badness* and *Naugh-*  
 ' *tiness* of Men being removed) then a *single As-*  
 ' *firmation*

*Affirmation* or *Denial*, although there were no Danger  
of *Perjury*.

In this Sense in a Manner, do mostly all the graver Authors interpret that Place of the Gospel, or Command of Christ, of *Not Swearing at all*; but especially *Augustine* lib. 4. of the Lord's Words in the Mount, Cap. 30. and 31. and in his Book *de Mendacio*, cap 15. and *Epist.* 154. to *Publicola*, and often else-where; For which Interpretation or Understanding votes also *Philo Judaeus* in his Book of the *Decalogue*, Tom. 2. p. 129. where treating of an Oath, he thus congruently writeth; *Men sin in this Respect many and divers Wayes, therefore it will be most profitable and most agreeable to the Reasonable Nature, to abstain ALTOGETHER from Swearing, and so to accustom to Truth, that simple Speech may have the Force of an Oath, &c.* Which Things *Philo* in the same Place pursues to the same Sense, very congruently in the Gospel, that which also he confirms in his Book of *Special Laws*, Tom. 2. pag. 137. And afterwards, *If therefore, as I said before, Christ the Lord for the Danger of Perjury, and also for the Reverence or Religion of an Oath, commands his NOT to Swear at all, though otherwise, it be true which they affirm; If I say, there be so much Reverence of an Oath, how great is the Perfection? It is not likely nor agreeable to Reason, that the Lord Christ, the Patern of true and solid Virtue, every Action of whom is our Instruction, did Swear so often, that is, should swear as often as he used this Form, Verely, verely, I say unto you, &c. For how can every moral Action of his, or in his Conversation, be our Instruction or Example, if he so frequently and every where seems to do that, which he so vehemently and earnestly commanded his, even his chosen Disciples, that is, his Apostles, that they should not do it at all? Yet Augustine in his Book of the Apostles Words, Ser. 30. seems by his Authority to create some Scruple and Ado for us, inasmuch as he seems to censure and say, That it is a kind of Perjury when any wittingly & willingly (that is, with certain*

certain Reason and Will, or of set Purpose) *useth this Word VERELY, to confirm any Thing*: Yet if we diligently mark and weigh the Words of St. *Augustine* there, he intends no other then what we intend, acknowledge and confess, and is necessarily to be confessed, namely, that he which from a *false Opinion* and *Perswasion*, and an *Erroneous Conscience*, as *Divines* call it, thinketh and believeth that he *Sweareth* in very Deed in using this Word, as if this Word were an Adverb of *Swearing*, that sometimes he happens in a Manner to *Forswear*, if that which he affirms in this Manner be *false*; yet this is accidentary and adventitious, namely, by the Intention of him that sweareth of his own *Will*, or rather *Error* or *Ignorance*, and not by the Force and Propriety of the Word *Amen* or *Verely*, seeing, as we have said even now, that it is not a Word or Note of *Swearing*, but rather of confirming, as we confess: and the same St. *Augustine* teacheth else-where, but especially in *Tract 41.* on the Gospel of *John*, on those Words of Christ the Lord, *Verely, verely, &c.* where *Augustine* moderating his Words, saith thus, '*Verely, verely, is, if we may so say, in a certain Manner, a Swearing of Christ.*' Now these Words of *Augustine* are to be weighed; he dealeth not simply, but with an Additament and Caution. *Verely, verely, to be* (if it be lawful to say it) after a Manner a *Swearing* of Christ; for so he declares plain enough, that *Verely, verely,* is not properly *swearing*, or a Note of *Swearing*, but only improperly, and after a certain Manner, viz. So far forth as Christ the Lord doth familiarly use this Word as *Swearing*, although in very Deed, and properly it be not an Adverb of *Swearing*, but rather affirming and asserting simply and in good Faith, to gain a better Perswasion of the *Matter* or *Doctrine*; for Christ never seems to have *Sworn*, if we will speak truly and properly of *Swearing*, but alwayes us'd a simple Speech though sometimes by *amplificationem*; he hath used this, even repeated, I say, for the greater Perswasion of his Heavenly Doctrine, that by this Means he might give his an Example



of *Not Swearing* rashly and every where, as we have already said, to whom he plainly commanded, saying, *Swear not at all, &c. but, &c.* so great is the Religion of *Swearing*, and the Danger of *Forswearing*.

*The Approbation and Commendation of the Doctors of Paris.*

*We have carefully read these Commentaries on the Epistles of St Paul, and Timothy, and Titus, wherein the most Learned Author, according to the great Learning wherein he excells, largely and elegantly opens the more hidden Senses of the Apostle; and we have thought them worthy to be printed for publick Profit, A & Par. 16. Feb. 1610. F. Coeff. F. J. Tourn, &c.*

Lindenbrog.  
Cod. leg. antiquar.

CXI. *LODOVICUS PIUS* Emperor, who in his Prologue saith, That from his Youth, by Christ's Inspiration, he had the Desire of the Worship of God, Capit. Addit. 4. Tit. 96. Of not Swearing: 'That every one beware of Swearing; because Forswearers as also Adulterers, shall not inherit the Kingdom of God.'

Ibid.

CXII. King *LUITPRANDUS*; The Law of the Lumbards, Tit. 28. Law 2. 'If he that enquires concerning Theft, believe not the Witnesses, the Witnesses may confirm it with an Oath, except they be such Persons as the King or Judge may trust without an Oath.'

Ibid.

CXIII. The Emperor *LOTHARIUS*, Of the Law of the Lumbards, Tit. 3. Law 10. 'Of those that enforce Payment of Tythes, we will not have them'

‘to be constrain’d with an OATH, for Fear of For-  
‘swearing.

CXIV. Of the Law of the *VISOGOTHS*, L. 2. Tit. Ibid.

1: Law 23. which was ancient: ‘*Let none come easily*  
‘*to an Oath: For the true Search of Justice rather com-*  
‘*mendeth this, that the Scriptures in all things may in-*  
‘*tercur, and the Necessity of Swearing may altoge-*  
‘*ther suspend it self.*

Thus much against *Swearing* from several *Roman Doctors*  
and others.

We shall in the next Place produce the Judgment of  
those Men, who run not so high in their Censure of *Oaths*,  
as the Persons that we have hitherto cited, but that believe  
it is not unlawful in any Case to take an *Oath*, and from  
them we doubt not to make appear, that it is best *Not to*  
*swear at all*; so far are they from pleading for *Swearing*,  
or punish those that conscientiously refuse it.

CXV. *WILLIAM TINDAL* saith, ‘Our  
‘Dealing ought to be so substantial, that our  
‘Words might be believed without an Oath: Our  
‘Words are the Signs of the Truth of our Hearts,  
‘in which there ought to be *pure & single Love to-*  
‘ward thy Brother. Again he sayes, ‘*Swear-*  
‘*ing* can only be allowed in *Charity*, where *Yea*  
‘and *Nay* have lost *Credance*; however, that no  
‘Judge or other ought in any Case to *compel* any  
‘Man to *swear* against his Will.

*Peter Martyr*, who deserves well of the *English*  
*Protestants*, confesseth, ‘That *Christians* ought to  
live

live so *Charitably* and *Uprightly*, as not to need an Oath, and that they may not be called upon to *Swear*. Again, 'Let us so live that there may be no need for us to *Swear*, either by *God*, or any other Thing *at all*; and this (says he) is that same *AT ALL*, which Christ spake of.

N. Zegerus upon *Mat. 5. 34.* tells us, 'That the most *Ancient Writers* from thence concluded all *Oaths* forbidden, and that the bare Word of *Christians* ought to be more *Sacred* and *Firm* then the most Religious *Oaths* of the *Jews*.

CXVI. *H. GROTIUS*, a great & Learned Man,

On *Mat. 5.* excludes all *Oaths*, not only such as are used in common *Conversations*, but such as relate to *Trade* or *pecuniary Matters*; allowing some others for avoiding *Infamy*, for preserving a *Friend*, & for a great *Service* to their *Country*, as not *morally necessary*, and by *Precept*, but only by *Consequence* and *Remedy*; concluding that it is best to live so, as not to need an *Oath*: And so both many of those *Oaths* imposed upon us, are laid aside by him; and also he gives many *Cautions* shewing that it is best not to *Swear at all*, if it may possibly be avoided: But in Answer to his Interpretation; All *Oaths* are forbid that are performable to the Lord; Now unless the *vain inconsiderate*, *Oaths*, such as are used in common *Traffique* are only those that are to be perform'd to the Lord, *Solemn Oaths*, such as the *Law* allow'd, are also prohibited. Besides, the *Yea* and *Nay* of a true *Christian* is as capable of all those good *Services* as an *Oath*, if the *Sanctity* of his Faith

Faith and Profession be allowed: And if any Prejudices come to a Man's *Friends, Country or Self*, because his *Yea* and *Nay* is rejected, it will never lye at his Door, who offers all Christ permits him, and his Conscience will dispense with; but on the *Distruster's* Side, especially, when he that in Conscience can't *Swear*, offers as large CAUTION as he that *SWEARS*, and is willing to undergo *Equal Punishment*, in Case of *Untruth*, that the other by Law sustains for *Perjury*. And those that will have it to relate to *Rash*, and not *Judicial Oaths*, quite cross the Text; for Christ prohibits not only *vain* and *superfluous Oaths*, as now called, such as were alwayes *unlawful*, even under the *Law*; but such as were allowed in the Times of the *Law*, rendering them also by *Evangelical Verity* under the *Gospel*, *Vain, superfluous* and *Unlawful*: For well said *Bp. Sanderfon*, 'No Need to forbid by a new Command Things that of themselves were alwayes unlawful. Otherwise, we must read Christ's Words thus, *Ye have heard by them of Old Time, thou shalt not forswear thy self, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine Oaths; but I say unto you, Swear not at all, except before a Judge*; as if *Swearing* before a *Judge* under the *Law*, were not an *Oath* performable to the Lord; and such it self the Place most expressly forbids; or thus, *Of Old it was said, thou shalt not forswear thy self, but let your Yea be Yea, and your Nay, Nay, thou shalt perform to God thine Oaths in Truth and Righteousness: But I (who say more then was said of Old) say unto you, Swear not at all, but perform thine Oaths to God in Truth and Righteousness*; The Inconherence of which must needs be obvious to every considerate Person; yet it is the only Reading that can be left upon those Interpretations. We say, that what God dispensed with under the *Law*, he resolved to remove under the *Gospel*, and to wind up Things to a higher Pitch of *Truth & Righteousness*: from *Adultery* in the *Act*, to *Adultery* in the *Thought*; from *Revenge*, to *Sufferance*; from *True Swearing*, to *NO Swearing* at all, where by all Abuse of *Oaths* and *Perjury* come to be removed

with

De juram.  
Praelect. 5.

442 with the *Oaths* themselves, by working out of Man's Heart that Fraud and Falshood that brought them in, and implanting *Evangelical Verity* in room thereof, which speaketh the Truth, the whole Truth, and nothing but the Truth to his Neighbour, and makes a like Matter of Conscience to tell a Lye, as to Forswear. And it is known to Almighty God, and we most heartily desire it may be known and belived by you, that we have no other End nor Inducement to this so general Refusal we are found in throughout the Nation.

CXVII. Bp. *USHER* is so tender in this Point, that set aside his *Vindication of the Waldenses*, in his *Sum of Christian-Religion*, he makes it necessary to the taking of an *Oath*, that it be considered,

‘*First*, If the *Party we deal with* (really) doubt of the Thing we *affirm* or *deny*, thereby making ‘*Distrust* the Cause of *Swearing*, and implying, that ‘not *Custom*, but real *Diffidence* should only continue *Swearing*; consequently, not to continue ‘where *Distrust* is done away.

‘*Secondly*, It is to be weighed if the *Party's Doubt* ‘wherof we speak, be *Weighty*, and *Worthy of an Oath*, which we fear, is seldom thought upon; *Custom* ‘prevailing even to *Triffles*, as well as most excessive vain *Swearing* in Common Conversation.

‘*Thirdly*, If the *Question be Weighty*, whether ‘(saith the Bishop) the *Doubt may be ended with Truly* or *Verely*; or doubting, it *Verely, Verely*, as Christ ‘did for you, by his Example we ought to forbear ‘an *Oath*: *Mat. 5. 37.* Wherefore should it not, ‘especially among *Christians*.

‘*Fourthly*,

Fourthly, 'Whether there be not yet any other fit Means  
'to try out the Matter before we come to an Oath. 2

This is our Case; and we make it our Sober Request, that it would please you to consider this Particular; for doubtless, an Expedient may very easily be found, without bringing us under the Bondage of an Oath.

CXVIII. FER. TAYLER, Chaplain in Ordinary to K. Charles I. and late Bishop of Down and Conner, in his Book call'd 'ENIATTOΣ, A Course of Sermons, London printed 1673. Sermon of Christian Simplicity, fol. 228. Thus, 'Our blessed Lord would not have his Disciples to Swear at all (not in publick Judicature) if the Necessity of the World would permit him to be obey'd. If Christians will live according to the Religion, the WORD of a Christian were a sufficient Instrument to give Testimony, and to make Promises, and to secure a Faith; and upon that Supposition, Oaths were useless, and therefore forbidden; because there would be no Necessity to invoke God's Name in Promises or Affirmations, if men were INDEED Christians; and therefore in that Case would be a Taking in vain: But because MANY are not; and they that are in NAME, oftentimes are in nothing els, it became necessary that Men should Swear in Judgment and in publick Courts. But consider who it was that invented and made the Necessity of Oaths, of Bonds, of Securities, & all the Artifices of Human Diffidence and Dishonesty: These Things were indeed found out by Men, viz. All their Reverent Fathers in God, Arch-Bishops, Bishops, Deans, and the Judges of the Land, Justices of the Peace, and all Officers term'd Ecclesiastical or Civil, Judges, Priests and People NO Christians, else would they suffer Christ's Doctrine to be obeyed, who not only

ly enforce OATHS on Strangers, but having the like Diffidence, One Father in God of Another, one Judge and Justice of another, impose them on their Brethren and Fathers, with Equal Distrust.

but the Necessity of these was from him that is the Father of all Lyes; from him that hath made many faire Promises, but never kept any; or if he did, it was to do a bigger MISCHIEF, to flatter the more; For so does the DE-  
VIL.

See *Jews Antiquities*, Chap. 12 Pag. 52. Concerning the Pythagoreans, the Esseni, and concerning the just Man at Athens, which they would not have to swear; And what the Scholiast on Aristophanes, Lib. 12. p. 286. saith of Rhadamantus.

CXIX. Lastly, Bp. GALLDEN in his Discourse for Solemn Swearing, sayes thus much against it.

1. 'That Dissimulations, Frauds, Jealousies, &c. gave Rise to Oaths.

2. 'That The Ancient Christians and Fathers, that they might not be short of the Esseni, who WOULD NOT TAKE AN OATH, REFUSED TO SWEAR, saying to the Hea-then; Christianus sum, I am a Christian; to each other, Yea, yea; Nay, nay; thereby keeping up the Sanctity and Credit of their Profession.

3. 'That as Christians, truly such, we should possibly need no Swearing; for an Oath is not (sayes he) Moral or Preceptive, but an Expedient or Remedy only against Falseness.

Lastly, 'That neither a true Christian and good Man need to be Compelled to Swear, in Order to the Awing him into Truth-telling—Nor is ill Mens Swearing of much Credit, with more to that Purpose: What Need then is there of either's Swearing?

The



The Substance of all which is this; *Oaths* rise with Fraud; Men growing *False* and *jealous*, *Swearing* or *Aying* by *Oaths* into True Evidence, became an Expedient; and during this imbecil and imperfect State of Mankind, Almighty God, that hath been ever wont to stoop to Man's Weakness, condescended to yield the *Jews* that Custom, provided that they refrain'd from *Common* and *Idolatrous Oaths*; and when they were called to *Swear*, they did it by the Name of the True God, thereby manifesting their Acknowledgment of him; but Christ, who is the Restorer of Breaches, the Builder of waste Places, the Bringer back of the Captivity of his People (where *Oaths* were first wanted and learned) and the Setter up of the Kingdom of God (which stands in Righteousness) redeems into Truth-speaking which fulfils the Law by taking away the Occasion of an *Oath*; and such as are the true, humble and faithful Followers of this worthy Leader, need no *Oath* to compel them into Truth, to whom Truth is Natural, being freed by it, *Joh. 8. 32.* from *Fraud & Falseness*, and consequently from *Swearing*, which took Occasion by it to enter the World. Now we profess our selves in the Fear of Almighty God to be such as have thus learned Christ Jesus, and for the Reverence and Holy Love we bear to his Righteous Commandment we can't take an *Oath* in any Case.

Object. 'Tis True, and you say well, *Oaths* only serve till Truth-speaking comes, and you say, it is come to you; But how shall we know that?

Ans<sup>r</sup>. We intreat you to try us: No Man can be justly condemn'd before he be guilty; nor reputed guilty in the Sight of men, till discover'd, You will have as easie a Way to catch us at *Lying*, as others at *Forswearing*; and if you find us such, inflict the same Punishment for Our Lye, which is enacted for their Perjury.

Be pleased to consider:

- I. The Rise of OATHS.
- II. The Prohibition of CHRIST.
- III. The Judgment of so many good HEATHENS.
- IV. The Belief & Practice of so many primitive CHRISTIANS, Celebrious FATHERS, Godly MARTYRS, and Learned PROTESTANTS.

V. The *Cause* they use who in any Sense allow of an *Oath*.

VI. That it is matter of *Faith*; and ~~what is not of Faith~~ *is Sin*. And that we cannot alter our Minds without *Conviction*, unless we should turn *Hypocrites*; And what *Security* can or will you have from our *Oaths*, who must first make us to break the Tye of our own *Conscience* before we can take them? It can't be thought, we should keep with you, when you make us break with our selves.

VII. Consider what *express Scripture* we have for it, and that in the *Judgment* and *Martyrdom* of many good and famous Persons.

VIII. Be pleased to weigh the great *PERJURY* that is now in our World, and daily *Numerous Oaths* belcht forth by some, to show they dare be bold with *Sacred Things*; by others, to vent *Passion*; by too many (as they impiously think) to *grace their Matter*, whilst others have so great *Doubt* of their own *Credit*, that they *Swear*, to drive, what they say, home; and not a few use it, *merely to fill up vacant places*, being barren of better Matter. We think that instead of taking Advantage against us for *Not Swearing*, in so *Perjuring* an Age, we should rather receive *Encouragement* for speaking *That Truth without an Oath*, which others are *compell'd* to by *Oath*, if yet they speak it. *False-speaking* necessitated the Use of *Oaths* (say many) But *Oaths* proving now not the *Remedy*, but the *Disease*, What better *Expedient* can be used then to *come back to Truth-speaking*, which endeth *Oaths* in their first Cause, or *Occasion* at least. However, that such as are *not Sick* should be oblig'd to take the *Potions of the Sick*, only to keep them Company, That seems *Unreasonable*.

IX. Be pleased to consider the perishing *Difficulties* we meet withal in our *Commerce* in the World, particularly as *Creditors*, *Executors*, *Merchants*, *Ship-Masters*, *Apprentices*, &c. Men making us pay because of our *Tenderness* in this Matter. On this *OPPRESSION* that is exercised in *Petty Courts* and *Sessions* upon many *Hundreds* of us, who know not which Way to *Right* our selves, an *Oath* still being required in the Case; the *Refusal* of which for *Conscience sake*, exposing us to great *Losses*, both of *Estate*, *Liberty* and sometimes *Life* by *Tedious* and *Cruel Imprisonments*.

X. But the *Loss* and *Trouble* is not alwayes our own; Our Neighbours frequently become *Sufferers* against our Wills: *First*, In that we can *perform no Office* in common with them, however otherwise.

therwiseable to discharge it. Secondly, Nor can we serve them in the Capacity of *Witnesses*, which Qualification goes a great Way towards the *Maintenance of Justice*; and all because our *solemn Word* will not be received instead of an *Oath*: Relieving us here is a double *Benefit*, for our *Neighbours* share with us in it; and it manifestly tends to the Preservation of *Society*. And whatever any may please to think of us, we are as willing and ready to contribute all *Honest Assistance* to the *Maintenance of Justice*, and answering the Ends of *Government*, according to our *Ability and Conscience*, as any Sort of Men that live under it.

XI. And Lastly, We intreat you further to consider, that Our CAUTION is as large as the Man that *Swears*: For though you make a Difference between him that tells an *Untruth*, and he that *Forswears*, in Favour of the former; yet we cheerfully submit our selves to the *Punishment of the Perjured*, if we break our *WORD*; do you but please to take us into *equal Priviledge* with the *Swearer*: If there be any *Damages*, we conceive it is done to Us, who sustain the same *Punishment* for an *Untruth*, which is the only Due of *Perjury*; and if you condescend to yield us the *Kindness* of the one, we offer our Persons to answer the just *Severity* of the other.

We will add here out of *Hoof's History of the Netherlands*, a *President*, not impertinent to our Purpose, fol. 464, 465. translated out of *Latin* as follows.

CXX. 'In this Assembly of the States (*saith Hoof*) 'there was something attempted towards the Oppression of the *Menists*, as appears by a certain Letter, 'written from *Dort*, the last of *March*, by the *Ld. Sr. Aldegonde*, to the Minister *Casparius Heidanus*; which 'was thus worded.

'The Cause of the *Menists* hath since receipt of your 'and *Taffin's* Letters yesterday been treated of with the 'most illustrious *Prince*; And verely, I find it more difficult then I had hoped [for ever may and will such Cursed Hopes meet with such Wise Repulses from you.

'gent Rulers] ' For, he had at *Middelburgh* given me great  
 ' Hopes, that we should seclude from the Freedom of  
 ' *Burgeses*, or at least, not so solemnly receive those that  
 ' refused an *Oath*. Now he alledgerh, that such a thing  
 ' cannot be concluded without a new Convulsion in the  
 ' Churches, because the *States* will never suffer, that  
 ' such a Law be made, as they judge no wayes condu-  
 ' cing to the Common Good of the Republick. Yea,  
 ' he avers, That this was the only Cause formerly, which  
 ' brought their *Consistories* so far into the Displeasure of the  
 ' States, that it differed very little, but they had been  
 ' all at once voted down, and laid aside by the Council:  
 ' That they [the *Clergy*] were now again about the same  
 ' thing, and that in such a season, that no doubt many  
 ' would pour in cold Water out of the *Popish* Hodg-podge.  
 ' That his settled Judgment was, that this would turn  
 ' to great Disadvantage, and breaking down of their  
 ' Churches.

' And when I [saith *Aldegonde*] fervently urged,  
 ' That we could easily reject those that broak the Band  
 ' of all Humane Society, upon Pretence of Civil and  
 ' Political Order: and when I added (saith he) how  
 ' much *Danger* and *Peril* Church and State were threat-  
 ' ned with by such a Conclusion of the Council, in it  
 ' self Ungodly, He answered me sharply enough, That  
 ' those men's YEA must pass for an *Oath*; and that we must  
 ' not urge this thing any further, or we must confess, that the  
 ' *Papists* had Reason to Force us to a Religion that was against  
 ' our Consciences; and that the *North-Hollanders* would  
 ' not at all allow of it.

' In short (saith he) I scarce see any thing we can get  
 ' done in this Point, which verely [ye may believe  
 him

him upon his Protestation] Is the greater Smart to me, & the more I observe that the Minds of many Honest Men, by the pretending of I know not what unreasonable Stumbling Blocks, will be thereby imbitter'd, yea, I could almost say, wounded; to see them less affected to those, that to their uttermost seek to advance the Cause of the Church.

The PRINCE (saith he) partly in the Name of the State, and partly of himself, chid me, as if we were about to set up in our Clergy a *Dominion over the Conscience*; and as if they endeavour, by their *Laws and Constitutions*, to subject all others to them: And he praised the Saying of a Monk that was lately here, who answered to the Objection [of the Persecuting Spirit of the *Romish Church*]. *That our Pot had not gone so long to the Fire as theirs, whom we did so much revile upon that Account* — And that he clearly saw, That before two Ages passed, the Church-Dominion would upon both sides stand on even Ground.

To which Hoofst adds, 'By this we may observe, of what Consequence the Prince and States then held Liberty of Conscience to be.

And that what we have hitherto said may not be thought a thing impracticable, we shall present you with the Judgment and *Edicts* of Foreign Governmen's.

Here follow Two Letters of the *Grave* of Nassou and Prince of Orange, to the *Magistrates* of the City of *Middelburgh*, in Behalf of the *Menists* there.

## CXXI. A Copy of the First Letter.

**F**Orasmuch as a Supplication hath been presented unto his Excellency in behalf of certain Inhabitants of this City of Middelburg; complaining thereby, That the Magistrates of the said City had lately caused their Shops to be shut, and consequently prohibited their Trade, which yet the only means which they have to maintain their Families; the said Prohibition proceeding from their not having yet taken the Usual OATH, as others: The said Inhabitants further remonstrating, how that they now, for a certain long Term of Years, have, without taking the said Oath, freely born all Civil Burdens, Contributions and Taxes, equally with other Burghesses and Inhabitants of this said City, without ever having been in any Default: and therefore ought at present still to remain unmolested, seeing they do therein not desire any thing else, then to live in the Liberty of their Consciences, upon which Account this present War against the King of Spain hath been by his Subjects taken up, and all Ceremonies contrary thereunto resisted; in which such Advance is, through the Help of God, made, that the aforesaid Liberty of Conscience is preserved; and therefore it would be an Unequal Thing to Deprive

prive the *Supplicants* thereof, who have helped to acquire the same by bearing Taxes, Contributions, and other Burdens, not without great Peril of their Bodies and Lives; consonant to which they having presented a Request to the aforesaid Magistrates, but got for Answer, *That they must regulate themselves according to the Policy and Order of the aforesaid City*: Whereby (*said the Petition*) the aforesaid Magistrates seem to endeavour by the *Oath*, not only totally to ruin and expel out of these Lands the Petitioners, with their Wives & Children, residing in *Middelburgh*; but consequently innumerable others, in *Holland* and *Zeeland*, who have (according to his Excellency's Proclamations) placed themselves under his Excellency's Protection, by which no man can be any wayes benefited; but all these Lands received great and considerable Dammage, because thereby the Traffique thereof would be every where greatly diminished: Intreating therefore, and humbly begging his Excellency, that looking upon their Case with Compassion, he would take due Course about it, especially seeing that the aforesaid Petitioners do proffer, that their *YEA* passing for an *Oath*, the Transgressors hereof should be punished as Oath-Breakers.



Therefore, his Excellency having considered the Premises, and having maturely deliberated upon the same, hath, with the previous Advice of the Governour and Council of Zeeland, ordered and appointed, ordereth and appointeth hereby, That the aforesaid Petitioners, YEA shall be received by the Magistrates of the aforesaid City instead of an OATH; provided, that the Transgressors thereof shall be punished as Oath-Breakers and Perjured Persons. His Excellency charging and commanding the Magistrates of Middelburgh, and all others whom this may concern, No further to oppress the Petitioners contrary to their Consciences, concerning the Oath; but suffer them to Open their Shops, and Enjoy their Trades, as they formerly have done: all by Provision, and till such time, as there shall be, in more Tranquillity of Affairs, with ripe Deliberation, regard being had thereunto, ordained therein, as shall be found convenient.

This done under his Excellency's Name and Seal, in the City of Middelburgh, upon the 26. January, 1577.

Guilliaume de Nassou.

By my Gracious Lord, the Prince, subscribed,  
De Baudemont.

## CX XII. A Copy of the Second Letter.

The Prince of Orange, Grave of Nassau,  
Lord and Baron of Bueda, Diest, &c.

Honourable, Honest, Worshipful, Wise, Discreet,  
Dear and Singular :

**F**Orasmuch as certain House-keepers there inhabiting, being, as they say, Menists, have, by way of Complaint divers times signified to us, how that You are daily Molesting them, and Depriving them of the Means of Gaining in Rest & Quietness their Livings for them and their Families; forbidding them to open their Shops, under the Pretence, that they should Refuse to take an Oath in the same Form as other Burgeses; upon which we having taken ripe Deliberation: And forasmuch as the aforesaid People do proffer to bear equally all Burdens with other Citizens, and even in the Case of Arms, which mostly moves them to contribute, do you such Performances at their Charges, as your selves or they that shall have the Orders shall find in all Reason and Equity fit to be done, and they will bear it :

We

Therefore conceive, that ye do very ill, not  
to permit them to live in Peace and Quietness,  
according to the Mind of their Conscience, accord-  
ing to the Act which we, with the Advice of the Go-  
vernour and Council formerly afforded them, which  
they say, they have exhibited to you; And yet not-  
withstanding, we find that you have hitherto refused  
to give heed unto it, and to our precedent Letters,  
and so we are constrain'd for this last time to write  
this, by which we plainly declare unto you, That it  
concerns not you to trouble your selves in par-  
ticular with any Man's Conscience, so long as no-  
thing is treated or done that might extend to  
any Man's Scandal; in which Case we will neither  
respect nor bear any Man.

And therefore we charge and order you expressly,  
To desist all further Molestation or Hinderance  
of the said Menists in their Merchandize or Han-  
dicrafts to gain their Livelihood for their Wives  
and Children, suffering them to open their Shops,  
and work as they have in times past done; till  
such time as there shall be otherwise ordered by  
the Generality (who are thereunto qualified)  
And therefore take heed that ye do nothing against  
this, and the Act to them granted, or to further any  
Fines from them upon that Account; provided,  
nothing

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nothing be by them attempted, which might bring  
Scandal of any Man; And they shall bear all Equal  
Equal Burdens, as other Men. Herewith, &c.

Subscribed by Copy,

De Baudemont.

CXXIII. Also, by the *Treaties of Peace* between  
the *States General* of the *United Provinces*, and the *Kings* of  
*England, Spain, &c.* ann. 1674. there is a special Article  
therein contained, That 'All their Ship-Masters of Merchant  
'Ships, shall carry along with them a Sea-Brief, according to  
'the Form thereby prescribed.

In which it is expressly declared, that 'Such Master  
'shall come before the Magistrates, and by his solemn Oath  
'testifie, that such Ship, whereof he is Master, doth properly  
'belong unto the Subjects of the said States General; unto  
'which Sea-Brief, under the Seal of the City's intire Faith and  
'Credit is given.

And although by the said *Treaties*, the Master was  
to give his Oath, yet the Magistrates in *Holland* do take  
the Solemn Affirmation of such as Cannot Swear instead of  
an Oath, and insert it so accordingly in their Sea-Briefs;  
and then it runs thus, 'These are to certify, &c. That A. B.  
'hath before us Solemnly Affirmed and Declared, that the  
'Ship C. D. whereof he is Master, doth properly belong  
'and appertain to the Subjects of the States General of the  
'United Provinces, &c.

Which can be sufficiently evidenced, if required.

This was the Care, this the Condescension of other Governments, for the Relief of Persons under our Circumstances: And we take Liberty to affirm, That the Trade and Wealth of the United Provinces, are owing more to the Ingenuity and Industry of those Indulg'd Dissenters than to them of the National Religion, who would have slogg'd and tyranniz'd all-into Poverty and Vassallage.

Have Regard to our *Suffering Condition*, we beseech you, and shew your selves both Natural to a Member (be we reputed the meanest) of your own Civil Body, and so far Lovers of him who said, *Swear not at all*, as not to continue us Sufferers for not acting against his Command; at least, our Sense of it, and therein of our own Consciences; But make some *Provision* for us, as well as other Countries have done before you, as in your Wisdom you shall think meet; that all those, who are of the Society of the People called *Quakers*, and known of themselves to be so, shall not be molested for the future upon the Account of *Swearing*, but their Solemn YEA or NAY shall be taken in lieu thereof, and their Untruth, or Breach of Word, Punishable as Perjury.

God, we know, that delights in Mercy, and in all Acts of Tenderness to the Sons of Men, will favour so Natural, so Generous and so Christian an Enterprize; and the Proposers, Promoters & Effecters of this happy Deliverance from the heavy Clog of *Swearing*, under which we and our Families have so long groaned, will not, we dare believe, go without their Rewards at the Hands of the Almighty, whom, at what rate soever ye shall deal with us, we do, from the bottom of our Souls, humbly and heartily implore, That it would please him so to dispose your Hearts, as you may best Discharge that High Trust reposed in you, to the Honour of his Great Name, and the Prosperity of this Famous Kingdom; the most certain Foundation of True Felicity to your selves; and which will give, as a good Example to others, so the clearest Reputation to you and your Posterity.

*This performed in the Name and for the Service of the  
People call'd Quakers*

William Penn, Richard Richardson.

